University of Alberta

Mandating Awareness/Inviting Inclusion: An Analysis of the Challenges Confronting Educators of Inclusive Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the experiences of teacher educators involved in a mandatory inclusive education course for preservice teachers at one Canadian post-secondary institution. The realm of inclusive education discussed in this study involves education for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, with a focus on those students who are at risk of exclusion due to their ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and/or ability. This study draws on a critical framework and employs a multi-method research design that utilizes a qualitative case study involving semi-structured interviews and document analysis. In exploring the intersections between teacher education and inclusive education, this study investigates the rationale and development behind one inclusive education course and the challenges faced and successes experienced by faculty involved with the course. More importantly, this research provides insight into the limitations and possibilities of using a mandatory inclusive education course to effectively prepare preservice teachers for diverse classrooms.

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INTERTEXT I – CLASS PHOTOS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a prospectus of this thesis. Specifically, this chapter outlines the rationale for conducting this study, the significance of the research, and the specific research questions that guided this study. An overview of the other sections of this thesis is also provided at the end of this chapter.

Rationale for the Study

Similar to the findings of my research, the rationale for conducting this study is multifaceted and dynamic, as well as both personal and professional. My primary desire to explore preservice teacher education and its intersections with inclusive education, stems from my experiences in the Canadian school system as both a student and teacher. These experiences have been set within a range of classrooms in numerous ethno-culturally and economically diverse communities within western and northern Canada.

Though my experiences are varied, as filtered through changing environmental, political and social forces, there have been some constants within my experiences. First, despite the unconventional nature and diversity within my own family background, I am white, middle-class, able-bodied and heterosexual; therefore I have been privileged in both the capacities of student and teacher. Second, I have been schooled, for the most part, with Eurocentric and patriarchal epistemologies. These epistemologies have hierarchically privileged 'mainstream' perspectives within the structure and curriculum of the schools I have attended. Finally, I have witnessed the reproduction of educational inequities within all classrooms I have been in. As I

have progressed through the education system from elementary school to graduate school, and as I have transitioned from student to educator, I have seen first hand the segregation of students at each level across lines of power afforded by ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and/or ability.

On a professional level, I have endeavoured to reflect critically on my experiences of the education system, particularly at the preservice teacher level, and to clarify the ways in which it has both shaped and repelled me. More importantly, I have placed my experiences within the larger context of research and literature on Canadian preservice teacher education. In doing so, I have found that both my experiences and the literature confirm that there is an absence of inclusive curriculum and practices within many Canadian teacher education programs (Lund, 1998; Schick, 2000; Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004). Given the profound potential of inclusive teacher education to be a starting point for change and growth towards educational equity in Canadian classrooms, I believe it is a critical place to focus research and academic study. Though my study represents only a small response to an area of research with great need and importance, I believe it is a valuable starting point. As Schick (2000) notes "despairing that no one ever learns is an excuse to give up too easily and a luxury available mainly to dominant white folk" (p. 97). This is one luxury I can do without.

Significance of the Research

Given the importance of inclusive teacher education, research is needed to investigate, guide and improve upon its implementation. Rapidly increasing diversity

within Canadian schools, along with greater acknowledgement about historical and current educational inequities, has generated significant interest in reforming teacher education to respond to this heightened awareness (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lund, 1998; Schick, 2000; Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004). While public and academic interest in this area has prompted some research on attempts at creating culturally competent preservice teachers, there is still a noticeable void in the research and practice of inclusive preservice teacher education. My research provides a response to this void by exploring the intersections between teacher and inclusive education. Specifically, my research provides an in-depth examination of one attempt at preservice teacher inclusive education through a mandatory course.

In investigating mandatory inclusive education, my research looks at the rationale and development of a required inclusive education course. More importantly, my research elicits the experiences of teacher educators involved in the challenging process of inclusive education. In exploring the challenges and successes faced by these teacher educators, my research examines common themes that have emerged from their experiences. Finally, my research uncovers effective structural, pedagogical and evaluatory practices that can be used in the inclusive education of preservice teachers.

Overall, my research provides insight into the limitations and possibilities of using a mandatory inclusive education course to effectively prepare preservice teachers for diverse classrooms. In doing so, my research offers a meaningful response to the debate on teacher education reform as well as contributes to the emerging body of literature on the topic of effectively teaching inclusive education.

Research questions

The following questions guided my research:

1. What was the rationale for mandating an inclusive education course for preservice teachers?
2. What tensions/barriers are experienced by teacher educators involved in teaching inclusive education courses?
3. What structural elements contribute to successful preservice teacher inclusive education?
4. What pedagogical strategies do teacher educators feel are effective in teaching inclusive education?
5. What evaluation techniques do teacher educators feel are effective in teaching inclusive education?
6. What impact do teacher educators feel a mandatory inclusive education course has on preservice teachers?
7. What insights have been gained by teacher educators who have been involved with mandatory inclusive education courses?

Thesis Overview

This thesis contains 6 chapters followed by references and appendices. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I present my theoretical framework. This chapter touches on the key elements of critical pedagogy, border pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy that inform the multiperspective theoretical framework from which I work. Chapter 3 is a review of relevant literature that explores the historical, philosophical

and sociological dimensions of inclusive education. In Chapter 4, I outline my research methodology, which details my qualitative approach and methods, research ethics and context, as well as the process and foundations of my data analysis. Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive look at my thematic analysis and findings. In the final chapter, Chapter 6, I discuss how the key themes from my findings relate to the literature, as well as the implications of these findings for policy and practice. I also provide recommendations for further research and offer some concluding reflections on inclusive teacher education.

INTERTEXT II – PARTICIPANT NARRATIVE

"If I've been successful in my career as a teacher educator, then I should be able to walk into any of our program graduates' classrooms and I should be able to look around and see that there is not a single kid in that class who is being excluded for any reason. Then we've been successful."

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory works to "problematize practice and interrogate the status quo as we make the familiar unfamiliar in a process of seeing the self, culture, society, and others in a new textured light" (Grace, 2006, p. 129). In this chapter I present my theoretical framework, which I envision as a fluid collection of concepts, beliefs and principles that guide my research. Specifically, this chapter touches on the key elements of critical pedagogy, border pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy that inform the multiperspective theoretical framework from which I work.

Multiperspective Theory

All theorizing is partial and located. As such, there is no theory that can explain my perceptions with ease; my understanding of the world, and of my location and identity within it, is constantly shifting. As cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1992a) notes: "We all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position" (p. 258). It is, in fact, my ongoing discomfort, reflections and evaluation of my theoretical positioning that has been more informative to my work than the theory itself.

Although my work finds no perfect alignment with any one theory, my multi-perspective theorizing falls within a critical paradigm. Specifically, my insights are predominantly informed by critical, border and culturally relevant pedagogies. In addition, I have been influenced by feminist, queer, cultural and Indigenous theories, which have impacted upon my work throughout this thesis. I am indebted to

theorists from these respective realms who continue to spark the re-evaluation and transgression of exclusionary educational policies and practices at all levels. I am further grateful for the many ways in which these theorists have helped to challenge and expand my perspectives and for the ways in which they have been critical in making space for my academic work. As black civil rights activist Anna Julia Cooper wrote in 1892, "Woman's strongest vindication for speaking [is] that the world needs to hear her voice. It would be subversive of every human interest, that the cry of one-half of the human family be stifled" (p. 121). So, too, would it be subversive of the human interest, if the exclusion of voices and perspectives continued, in any capacity, based on the speaker's ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, faith and/or ability.

Critical Pedagogy

> *"Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not."*
> (McLaren, 1998, p. 169)

Critical pedagogy, which draws on a diversity of discourses itself, examines the contexts, interests and power which influence and impact upon the nature of schooling (Grace, 2006). Critical pedagogy has been perhaps the most influential theoretical approach on my research and perspectives; in particular, the writing of critical theorists Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, and bell hooks have shaped my understanding of the context, purpose and possibilities of education.

Contextually, critical pedagogy highlights the political, social and economic terrain within which education occurs (Giroux, 2001). In making the context

transparent, critical pedagogy reveals the hidden curriculum which operates in schools and the importance of analyzing schooling "as a cultural and historical process, in which select groups are positioned within asymmetrical relations of power on the basis of specific race, class, and gender groupings" (McLaren, 1998, p. 163). Considering that within the context of most Canadian schools, teaching is a "predominantly white profession, despite the ever-increasing ethnoracial diversity of the student population" (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004, p. 338), educators need to be aware of the significance of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and/or ability on all aspects of the educational experience. As educator Brenda McMahon (2003) urges, "Those of us who are white educators need to be aware of what we bring to classrooms and schools. As part of that understanding is the need to locate ourselves consciously within the curriculum" (p. 268).

In addition to providing contextual insight, critical pedagogy's fundamental concern with education for social justice offers educators an alternative path to the current era of neo-liberal and commodified education. As outlined by critical theorist Paulo Freire (2005), emancipatory education is possible through raising learners' critical consciousness and through the informed action (praxis) that grows out of this raised awareness. While praxis has not been a primary focus of most preservice teacher programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004), critical theorists challenge educators at all levels to engage a critical paradigm and to consider their privileged positions within the classroom, the curriculum and the community as a whole (Giroux, 2005).

To address some of the issues relating to the exclusivity of education within the status quo, critical pedagogy provides educators with a 'language of possibility' (Giroux, 2005) that recognizes the potential for relevant, critical and transformative learning. As McLaren (1989) notes:

> Knowledge is relevant only when it begins with the experiences students bring with them from the surrounding culture; it is critical only when these experiences are shown to sometimes be problematic (i.e. racist, sexist); and it is transformative only when students begin to use the knowledge to help empower others, including individuals in the surrounding community. (pp. 189-190)

In the context of preservice teacher education, relevant, critical and transformative learning is of primary importance. In order to understand, challenge and overcome the inequities as well as the conscious and unconscious assumptions that circulate in educational settings, preservice teachers need to recognize the role that racialized identities, cultural understandings, gender, sexual orientation, class, and abilities play within educational policy and practice. Once a teacher is cogniscent and self-reflective about the workings of power and privilege, the conditions for student empowerment and equity can be nurtured within the classroom.

Finally, regarding critical pedagogy, it's important to recognize that there are many valid critiques of both critical pedagogy and of the work of various theorists within this realm. However, while some issues of accessibility and exclusivity still linger within critical pedagogy, many issues have been re-evaluated and resolved to some degree. I am fortunate to be able to reap the benefits of critical pedagogy's continual revision and growth to this point in time.

I also recognize that there is value in using the relevant and useful parts of a theory while still being able to reject or challenge its limiting aspects. As critical theorist bell hooks (1993) notes:

> To have work that promotes one's liberation is such a powerful gift – that it does not matter so much that the gift is flawed. Think of the work as water that contains some dirt. Because you are thirsty you are not too proud to extract the dirt and be nourished by the water. (p. 149)

hooks's (1993) writing and work have helped to expose the complexity of each person's subjectivity, which exacerbates the problematic nature of finding any theory that perfectly aligns with each individual's knowledge and understanding of the world. In the words of Stuart Hall (1992b), "The only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency" (p. 280).

Border Pedagogy

"Border pedagogy makes visible the historically and socially constructed strengths and limitations of those places and borders we inherit and that frame our discourses and social relations"
(Giroux, 2005, p. 20)

In addition to engaging with broad theoretical constructs within critical pedagogy, my work draws on critical theorist Henry Giroux's notion of border pedagogy. Giroux (2005) uses the concept of borders to provide:

> A continuing and crucial referent for understanding the co-mingling - sometimes clash - of multiple cultures, languages, literacies, histories, sexualities, and identities. Thinking in terms of borders allows one to critically engage the struggle over those territories, spaces, and contact zones where power operates to either expand or to shrink the distance and connectedness among individuals, groups and places. (p. 2)

Giroux's (2005) notion of borders, which he uses as "the primary category for signifying spaces of confinement, internment, punishment, surveillance, and control" (p. 2), provides a powerful metaphor of the social geography of marginalized individuals within dominant society. In the educational domain, the concept of borders is a particularly useful metaphor for the gated ideological, economic, cultural and ethnic chasm between most Canadian classroom teachers and their students. It further denotes the ways in which educational sites traditionally exclude 'difference', both through the structure of schools and through the language used within classrooms. As Giroux (2005) points out, "Language in all of its complexity becomes central not only in the production of meaning and social identities but also as a constitutive condition for human agency" (p. 11).

Despite the somewhat ominous image of bordered terrain that Giroux (2005) outlines in his border pedagogy, he also notes the porousness of ideological borders as well as their enabling possibilities. Further, he recognizes that "the borders of our diverse identities, subjectivities, experiences, and communities connect us to each other more than they separate us, especially as such borders are continually changing and mutating within the fast forward dynamics of globalization" (p. 7).

Through border pedagogy, Giroux invites educators to be 'border crossers', "acting beyond the traditionally perceived boundaries of their work, culture, and social location to join with others in the quest for a substantive democracy" (Mayo, 2002, p. 201). Giroux suggests that in order to create conditions within classrooms where border crossing is possible, educators must find ways to encourage students to speak and write from their own experiences and knowledge (1997). Educators

become border crosses when they bring in and create space for previously excluded perspectives, voices and experiences within their classrooms (Giroux, 1997).

Giroux's theory of border pedagogy was very influential in my exploration of preservice teacher inclusive education. Specifically, I draw on border pedagogy in my attempt to understand the experiences of teacher educators, working within dominant borders, who are attempting to challenge, expose and encourage preservice teachers to cross over the educational 'borders' that contain them.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

> *"If school is about preparing students for active citizenship, what better citizenship tool than the ability to critically analyze the society?"*
> (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162)

Utilizing a broad definition of culture as "the set of practices by which meanings are produced and exchanged within a group" (Bocock, 1992/2005, p. 233), and considering the many cultures encountered within North American classrooms, it is widely acknowledged that culturally relevant education is of critical importance (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Despite this acknowledgment, many educational settings, ranging from elementary classrooms to preservice teacher programs, are lacking in culturally relevant content and teaching practices (Schick & St. Denis, 2005).

Concerns about cultural relevancy relating to curriculum and pedagogy stem, in part, from critiques of the way educators have embedded culture into education rather than embedding education into culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pewewardy, 1993). To compound this concern is the issue that the culture they are inserting into education is typically a white, Christian, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied and

predominantly male 'culture', regardless of the demographics of their students. Even more problematic is the opaque, subversive and normalized manner in which this racialized, gendered and classed culture is being inserted into education.

One response to the cry for cultural relevancy within formal education was the development of culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy, like critical pedagogy, is a pedagogy of opposition and, like border pedagogy, is committed to the empowerment of the collective (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant pedagogy was conceived by educational theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings as a result of her more than six years of research on exemplary teachers of African American students, within the United States' school systems (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings's (1995) version of embedding education into culture is a stark contrast to the predominant education structure that I have previously described. Her version is one in which teachers utilize their students' multiple and diverse cultural backgrounds as a "vehicle for learning" (p. 161).

Ladson-Billings's (1995) research on what constitutes "good teaching" (p. 159) led her to highlight three criteria which embody what she calls culturally relevant pedagogy. First, students need to experience academic success. According to Ladson-Billings, this criterion means that teachers need to "attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them feel good" (p. 160). Second, students need to cultivate or sustain cultural competence. By 'cultural competence', Ladson-Billings is referring to the students' comfort level at being themselves as well as to the degree that their cultural experiences and knowledge are respected and integrated into their school lives. A further component of cultural competence, according to Ladson-

Billings, is for students to understand "the constructed nature of things such as 'art', 'excellence', and 'knowledge'" (p. 161) while also learning that "what they ha[ve] and where they came from [is] of value" (p. 161). The final element of culturally relevant pedagogy is that "students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p.160). As Ladson-Billings (1995) notes "Beyond those individual characteristics of academic achievement and cultural competence, students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (p. 162).

While Ladson-Billings's culturally relevant pedagogy was developed within the elementary and secondary school context, I draw on its criteria in my analysis of pre-service teacher education at the post-secondary level. Specifically, I look at the ways in which culturally relevant pedagogy is taken up and engaged by teacher educators in an effort to create culturally competent teachers through inclusive education. In the next chapter, I provide a review of the historical, philosophical and sociological dimensions of inclusive education within relevant educational literature.

INTERTEXT III – PARTICIPANT NARRATIVE

"Teacher education programs, and I believe this is the case across the province, tend to be [composed of] white, middle-class, female students, with a minority of other ethnicities. We probably need to be much more proactive in encouraging and in demonstrating that whole notion of inclusivity, in terms of the future teachers that we welcome into the program. There's a huge concern that, for example, for First Nations people to become teachers, it can be a road that's a very difficult one and I absolutely think that we need to address those issues. Not just talk about what should be happening in the K-12 system but what should be happening in future teacher programs to encourage and to represent more truly and fairly our society because the demographics in our teacher education programs do not represent society."

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on a broad conception of inclusive education which extends beyond issues of learner ability to encompass all areas of learner inclusion. Specifically, in this chapter I explore the historical, philosophical and sociological dimensions of inclusive education. In order to explore inclusive education critically, I also examine what has, and continues to be, silenced and excluded from formal education sites.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a commonly used term, but it has multiple meanings and interpretations within the field of education. Most commonly, the term represents the philosophy, principles and strategies associated with the integration of learners with 'disabilities' into mainstream school settings. A review of North American Faculty of Education web sites, as well as an internet search, will confirm this predominant meaning, and will reveal numerous documents related to the educational inclusion of students with varying physical and mental abilities.

Over the past few years, however, the term 'inclusive education' has evolved and broadened to include methods for engaging all students who remain on the margins within educational institutions. This more recent conception of inclusive education focuses on exploring strategies for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, specifically those who are at risk of social and academic exclusion due to their ethno-cultural differences, gender, sexual orientation and/or socio-economic status. It is this broader conception of inclusive education that I consider within this text. Specifically,

I draw on the concept outlined by Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery and Zine (2000) who envision inclusive education as mediated politically, racially and culturally in an effort to ensure that "every student is able to identify and connect with the school's social environment, culture and organizational life" (p. 13). Dei et al. (2000) further note that truly inclusive education necessitates a transformative agenda and involves the "negotiating of multiple knowledges" (p. 13). Finally, inclusive education, as discussed in this thesis, is concerned with education which aims to:

> Equip individual students with the knowledge and skills necessary to confront their own biases and prejudices, and work for social change. In the process, it legitimizes oppositional and subjugated voices while engendering an educational atmosphere in which all [students] can challenge and resist the structural forces that continually reproduce social oppression and inequality. (Dei et al., 2000, p. 15)

In the context of preservice teacher education, this vision of inclusive education has a dual purpose. It aims to challenge and transform preservice teachers themselves, so that they might, in turn, engage and empower their students.

Historical Dimensions

"We must know the past in order to understand the present so that we can plan for the future."
(Kirkness, 1999, p. 26)

Issues of inclusivity are not new areas of concern in preservice teacher programs, or in any school setting, even though evolving terminology might suggest otherwise. As Hollins and Guzman (2005) point out, "basic changes in teacher education for diversity are necessary, but have not occurred despite 25 years of attention" (p. 479). Indeed, neither diversity nor exclusion are recent Canadian

phenomena and one needn't look far to find a multitude of examples of exclusion in the educational domain. A review of Canada's colonial history reveals the targeted exclusion of Indigenous students (Ashworth, 1979; Kirkness, 1999), black students (Winks, 1969), non-heterosexual students (Grace, 2004; Kissen & Phillips, 2002) and female students (Curtis, Livingstone & Smaller, 1992), among many others, from schools at all levels. Both historically, and in recent decades, Canadian mainstream schools have been particularly successful "in engaging some students (e.g., students from dominant society), while disengaging others (e.g., poor, working-class, and racial minority students, and student bodies marked as 'different' by gender, sexuality, faith [and] dis/ability) (Dei et al., 2000, p. 8).

To some degree, currently evolving immigration patterns are changing the educational dynamics in schools, and to a much lesser degree the dynamics in Education Faculties (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004). While this shifting diversity may be perceived as a startling interruption to prior homogeneity and/or stability, culturally related adjustments, accommodation, assimilation and exclusion have occurred in all levels of Canadian education institutions for more than a century (Palmer, 1982). Canadian educational history, if carefully reviewed, is marred with cultural, economic and physical devastation caused by such endeavors as residential schools (Ashworth, 1979; Kirkness, 1999) and other discriminatory and/or assimilatory efforts directed towards non male, non-heterosexual, non-Anglo-Saxons (Palmer, 1982).

In discussing Canada's multicultural and assimilatory history, it is important to emphasize that multiculturalism existed in Canada long before Europeans arrived

(James, 2005). Drawing on the previously identified definition of culture as "the set of practices by which meanings are produced and exchanged within a group" (Bocock, 1992/2005, p. 233), Canada has, for centuries, contained multiple cultures consisting of varying Indigenous groups with unique languages, practices and experiences (Barman, 2003). Post European contact, Indigenous Canadians were cast together, as though they were from one culture, and were treated with discrimination in both education and law (Barman, 2003). As Barman (2003) notes, the British North America Act of 1867 combined racism with economics and "made no attempt to distinguish Aboriginal peoples in all their diversity and individuality, but simply reduced them to a single dependent status" (p. 213). The implications of Indigenous assimilation and discrimination are still prevalent in teacher education programs, which enroll very few Indigenous students (Archibald, Commodore, Janvier, McCormick & Pidgeon, 2002), and in mainstream schools, which typically rely on Eurocentric curricula and which frequently exclude non-white students (McMahon, 2003).

The teaching profession also has a history of exclusion and discrimination. Up until the 1850's, public school teaching was exclusively a white male profession (Prentice, 1977). When teacher education programs began expanding their enrollment to include white women in the mid-late nineteenth century, it was based on a discriminatory pay scale and on women occupying only the lower ranks of the available jobs (Prentice, 1977). Still today, Canadian preservice teacher programs, and the teaching profession in general, are predominantly composed of white

participants (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004; McMahon, 2003).

The origin and evolution of inclusive education, as a response to diversity within schools, are hard to locate since the movement has occupied many forms, in a variety of settings. What is clear is that despite the wealth of writing, over the years, on the need for educational reform related to inclusivity (Dei et al., 2000; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Wane, 2003), there are surprisingly few concrete examples of inclusive education components in Canadian preservice programs (Lund, 1998). The majority of preservice teacher programs remain focussed on mainstream curricular areas (Lund, 1998), while courses related to inclusive education remain largely absent, limited or optional, with only a few Education Faculties within Canada requiring preservice teachers to take these courses (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006; M. Larsen, personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Due to the unregulated nature of inclusive education within preservice teacher programs, both historically and presently, the likelihood of inclusivity being taught, has depended more on the particular instructor of a course than on the course curriculum itself (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004). While some preservice teacher educators are taking up the challenge to address this critical institutional void, many still choose to avoid uncomfortable and sensitive topics (Stovel, as cited in Lund, 1998). As Lund (1998) notes "although individual [educator] commitment to social justice on issues of ethnicity, culture and racism is admirable, it is an inadequate end goal considering the significant reform needed in faculties of education" (p. 268).

Further, while research over the years has focussed, to varying degrees, on efforts to create multiculturally competent teachers, a goal which is critical given the "increasingly diverse ethnoracial backgrounds of students in Canadian schools" (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004, p. 338), this focus addresses only a part of inclusive education. The broader picture of student diversity is missed when looking at culture only through an ethnic lens. A student's identity is fluid and complex and is affected by multiple factors including geography, language, culture, faith, socio-economic status, gender, ability and sexual orientation.

Exploring the historical dimensions of education, as it positions students for inclusion and exclusion, is critical in understanding student success. Preservice teachers must understand the value of children seeing themselves as important threads in the fabric of schools.

> Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him [or her]: the history of his [or her] people, their values and customs, their language, he [or she] will never really know himself [or herself] or his [or her] potential as a human being. (Indian Control of Indian Education, as cited in Ashworth, 1979, p. 3)

Philosophical Dimensions

> *"Eddy is white, and we know he is because nobody says so"*
> (Morrison, 1997, p.41)

In exploring the philosophical dimensions of inclusive education, I focus on ontology and epistemology as it relates to the identity and ideology of preservice teachers. It is essential to examine how preservice teachers' identities and ideologies are positioned, relative to their prospective students, so as to explore and envision methods for reducing the ideological and experiential divide between the two. While

it would be inaccurate to make blanket assumptions about all preservice teachers, and further problematic to assume that identity and ideology are fixed entities, it is important to attempt to 'locate' where preservice teachers are coming from.

As was previously noted, the teaching profession is marked by a vast economic, cultural and ethnic distance between many teachers and their students (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004; McMahon, 2003; Pewewardy, 2005; Wane, 2003). Most North American schools are "composed of multiracial student populations and predominantly monoracial teaching staffs" (McMahon, 2003, p. 268). The disparity between the Canadian Indigenous student population and the number of Indigenous teachers within Canada is particularly startling. A demographic report released in 2002 indicated that Indigenous peoples make up 6.4% of the overall school age population (ages 0-14) while Indigenous teachers make up only 1.3% of teachers employed in Canada (Archibald et al., 2002). These statistics are cause for concern, considering the well-documented recognition of the positive impact of Indigenous teachers on Indigenous students and in Indigenous communities (Archibald et al., 2002).

The ethno-cultural divide between teachers and their students makes common knowledge, perceptions and experiences unlikely (Wane, 2003; Pewewardy, 2005) and as a result, preservice teachers tend to rely on "stereotypical [and] homogenizing understandings of racial and cultural groups" (Wane, 2003, p. 6). As Freire (1975) reveals "Many educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their actions) [toward] whom their program was ostensibly

directed" (p. 75). Perhaps the more alarming feature of the authorial design of educational plans is not simply their ineffectiveness, but their seemingly neutral political nature. As McMahon (2003) points out:

> Education is not politically or morally neutral…Teachers act as moral agents through their status in the community, which is reinforced by expectations for teachers as defined by government legislation. It is also demonstrated on a daily basis when, both consciously and unconsciously, educators support or challenge prescribed values through the inclusion and exclusion of voices, and the manner in which divergent perspectives are presented. (p. 259)

Considering the political nature of education, self-reflective and transparent teacher ideology is critical. It is also critical that varying perspectives are encouraged and given space within classrooms (Kelly, 2001).

In addition to finding common ground "educators need to acknowledge the significance of race and privilege as they impact on all aspects of the educational experience" (McMahon, 2003, p. 268). The process of recognizing privilege requires that educators "unlearn the habits of institutional (as well as forms of racial, gender, and class-specific) privilege" (Giroux, 1992, p.35). Institutional privilege within a Euro-centric, white school system reveals itself both textually and in the establishment of norms. Textually, school curriculum and resources normalize white privilege and discrimination while positioning difference as "a given rather than as [the] produc[t] of unequal social relations" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). As educators Schick and St. Denis (2005) contend:

> Having white skin privilege has generally meant that one does not have to think about one's own racial identity: race and culture are things other people have as departures from the norm. One privilege of whiteness - to pass invisibly for the norm - depends on marginalized identities against which the norm can be compared. (p. 299)

Understanding issues of equity and privilege can, however, be a difficult task for preservice teachers. In her research findings, Levine-Rasky (2000) notes that "it is rare to find among the teacher candidates any reflection about white racialization and personal identity" (p. 267). Given this lack of understanding and reflection, it is no surprise that researchers have found many preservice teachers to be defensive and resistant to attempts to discuss these difficult topics (Dome et al., 2005; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Pewewardy, 2005). The minority of preservice teachers who are open to increasing their awareness and sensitivity regarding diversity are typically those teachers who have had previous exposure to varying cultural backgrounds, previous cultural education, have travelled to foreign countries and/or have had personal experience with discrimination (Smith, Moallem & Sherrill, as cited in Garmon, 2004).

In one comprehensive study by McIntyre, preservice teachers were found to insulate themselves from acknowledgment of their individual and collective participation and role in racism (as cited in Levine-Rasky, 2000). McIntyre found that, in an effort to dismiss white privilege and racism, preservice teachers employed such strategies as "derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counter arguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent, interrupting speakers and topics, and colluding with each other in creating a 'culture of niceness'" (as cited in Levine-Rasky, 2000, p. 265). As Levine-Rasky's (2000) research at one Canadian university demonstrates, preservice teachers are competent at resisting challenges to white privilege and are skilled at utilizing denial, hostility, ignorance, defensiveness and even niceness, as strategies to maintain hegemonic structures. Inclusive education

aims to interrupt the narratives and interrogate the epistemologies in which preservice teachers are entrenched, a process which can result in the destabilization of preservice teachers' identities and perceptions of the world itself.

In addition to overcoming resistance to new ideologies, inclusive education aims to move preservice teachers away from the promotion of individualized success towards the goals of collective success. As Ladson-Billings (1995) points out "culturally relevant teaching does not imply that it is enough for students to choose academic excellence and remain culturally grounded if those skills and abilities represent only an individual achievement" (p. 162). Inclusive education, which promotes teaching for social justice, is about moving towards both individual and collective well-being by challenging oppressive structures and ideologies.

Challenging oppressive ideologies involves first examining one's own ideology. As theorist Judith Butler contends, "the question of whether or not a position is right, coherent, or interesting, is in this case, less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us" (Butler, 1995, pp. 127-128). A truly anti-oppressive ideology requires personal struggle and continual re-evaluation.

The goals of inclusive education, for preservice teachers, are to decentre master narratives, challenge exclusive perspectives and build strategies for teaching that are inclusive and equitable. Inclusive strategies involve such practices as modelling inclusion, encouraging self-reflection and integrating curricular topics and knowledge representative of diverse linguistic, ethno-cultural and gendered

perspectives. Inclusive policies as well as administrative support are also critical elements to successful inclusive education initiatives.

Sociological Dimensions

"Dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and the students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object."
(Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 100)

In exploring the sociological dimensions of inclusive education, I consider primarily the relationship between teacher educators and preservice teachers. Specifically, I examine pedagogical attempts by teacher educators to fill inclusivity gaps and to promote culturally competent teaching through meaningful engagement.

In addition to the concerns of educational theorists and teacher educators regarding the meaningful engagement of preservice teachers on issues related to inclusivity, recent research has indicated that preservice teachers, themselves, feel inadequately prepared to face the realities of the diverse classrooms in which they will be teaching (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004; Sobel & Taylor, 2005; Stovel, Houego & Badali, as cited in Lund, 1998). In a study conducted in the preservice teacher program at the University of British Columbia by Stovel, students indicated that the coverage of cultural content was sporadic at best (as cited in Lund, 1998). Mahrouse and Mujawamariya (2004) found that preservice teachers at the University of Ottawa felt that coverage of cultural issues was limited, often superficial and "largely depend[ent] on the course instructor" (p. 343). Similarly, at the School of Education at the University of Colorado, Sobel and Taylor (2005), concluded that preservice teachers consistently "wanted more guided exposure to realities and

perspectives different from their own, more explicit demonstrations of strategies in university coursework, and more candid discussions about issues of diversity for learners and school systems" (p. 85). This research highlights the challenges posed to teacher educators regarding inclusive education. Teacher educators must attempt to fill this critical educational gap by discovering pedagogical tools that break down preservice teacher avoidance, defensiveness and, most of all, resistance to topics related to oppression and inequity.

Since teacher education programs are critical in the shaping of preservice teachers and since preservice teacher development is critical to educational outcomes for diverse populations of students (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), the strength of teacher education programs has far reaching implications for society. In response to this challenge, and with mixed results, preservice teacher programs and teacher educators have incorporated a variety of inclusive education strategies in an attempt to create culturally competent teachers.

At the Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for example, the teacher education program has adopted a program pedagogy, developed by educator Gloria Ladson-Billings, which centers on producing a culturally relevant teacher education program (Hesch, 1999). According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally relevant teaching involves the establishment of conditions where students can achieve academically, while maintaining the integrity of their culture. Culturally relevant teaching further involves supporting each student in developing a critical consciousness, where they have the ability to critique norms, values etc. that perpetuate inequality (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Hesch (1999) notes that in an effort to

achieve cultural competence, WEC has implemented some key strategies including an informal yet politically and socially active educational setting and an application process that chooses students based on life, work and volunteer experience as well as their reflection of "the racial and ethnic demographics of Winnipeg's inner city" (p.372). In addition, the curriculum at WEC is multilingual, focuses on the writing of minority authors and encompasses multicultural themes (Hesch, 1999). While there have been critiques of WEC's ability to realize fully its culturally relevant pedagogy, the program has been successful in addressing culturally meaningful themes for its inner city participants (Hesch, 1999).

Indigenous teacher educator Cornell Pewewardy (2005) has implemented shared journaling, as a pedagogical technique aimed at uncovering preservice teachers' world views, promoting critical reflection and working ultimately towards the goal of social justice. Pewewardy's shared journaling technique involves the pairing of culturally different preservice teachers, who then engage in multiple journal exchanges in which they explore, compare and reflect on their experiences, beliefs, perceptions and observations related to issues of gender, class and racialized identities. Roose notes the strength of shared journaling in forcing preservice teachers to "confront their fears and biases, to become not just tolerant of, but attracted to, difference, and to want to be able to learn about new ideas, connections, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world" (as cited in Pewewardy, 2005, p. 54). Pewewardy (2005) warns, however, that techniques such as shared journaling must be implemented within a larger framework of inclusive education, if they are to be effective once the

preservice teachers "return to the environments - dorms, homes, neighbourhoods, schools - in which the stereotypes were originally generated and sustained" (p.54).

Canadian educator George Sefa Dei (1996) suggests that cultural competence requires evaluating one's own experiences of oppression as a starting place:

> The concept of oppression may be helpful for those who are highly privileged in society and are just beginning to learn what social oppression really is. It helps these individuals to place their own grounded experiences of oppression, no matter how comparatively trivial in relation to more widespread and sustained forms of oppression that marginalized groups regularly experience, in a webbed system of domination/subjugation. (p. 66)

Accordingly, a couple of teacher education programs have begun to implement courses related to inclusion, which ask the students to reflect on their own experiences and then relate them to the experiences of students in the classroom (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006; M. Larsen, personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Crawford, Crumpler, Lenski, & Stallworth (2005) addressed cultural competency amongst preservice teachers in the United States, with experiential learning through ethnographic research in diverse communities. In this study, preservice teachers were asked to make ethnographic observations within a particular community over a period of seven months (Crawford et al., 2005). The purpose of this approach was to "help preservice teachers move beyond awareness to deeper understandings of the complexities of culturally diverse teaching" (Crawford et al., 2005, p. 89). Crawford et al. (2005) found that ethnographic research helped the preservice teachers to engage with a diversity of perspectives, as well as to examine assumptions and beliefs more critically, including their own.

Within a teacher education program in the United States, Dome et al. (2005) implemented narrative reflections, as a pedagogical technique aimed at helping preservice teachers to process themes encountered in a required course titled 'The Role of Cultural Diversity in Schooling'. Themes encountered in the course included culture, racism, and discrimination (Dome et al., 2005). Dome et al. (2005) found that the narrative reflections were effective at drawing out the underlying values, assumptions and beliefs held by the preservice teachers. They also found that the more intense and controversial discussions produced the deepest narrative reflections. Dome et al. categorized the preservice teacher responses as culturally aware, open (and apologetic), superficial, and/or defensive. While the narrative reflections clearly exposed the tensions and barriers that the teacher educators would have to overcome in teaching for inclusivity and equity, they provided clear insight into where the preservice teachers were coming from. Understanding students' foundational epistemologies is critical in determining how to guide their educational growth.

Not only are the pedagogical attempts to promote cultural competency varied; so, too, are the recommendations of educational researchers. Sobel and Taylor (2005) recommend "training, support, and mentoring to effectively implement diversity responsive practices" (p. 86), while Kitsantas and Talleyrand (2005) recommend the use of online resources to promote cultural competency. Mahrouse and Mujawamariya (2004) conclude that effective preparation of preservice teachers for inclusive education must include: mandatory - not optional - courses on multicultural education, integration of multicultural issues across the curriculum, a greater diversity of faculty and teacher candidates, and the provision of more practical strategies for

inclusive education. James (2005) determined that teacher engagement with diverse populations requires self-identification and personal investment in the schooling process, building a relationship with students that promotes their empowerment, and employing an interactive class dynamic.

Whatever the pedagogical techniques employed by teacher educators, it is clear that efforts need to be both comprehensive and sustained in order to address effectively issues of inclusivity with preservice teachers. In the next chapter, I outline the methodology used in my case study of one Canadian preservice teacher program that includes a mandatory course on inclusive education.

INTERTEXT IV – PARTICIPANT NARRATIVE

"I'm not sure after leaving the program, even with this [inclusive education] course, how many student teachers, deep in their hearts, really understand the shift between equality and differentiation and that to be really fair to all the children of difference in your class, you have to be differentiated in your orientation towards them. Unless the student teachers have experience personally with the act of exclusion in any deep way, unless they've been a minority - if we're talking about socio-cultural difference - unless they've had gender differences or sexual preference differences, unless they've been inside of gender battles or unless they've experienced what it's like to have a physical disability, they have real problems moving to the point of empathy."

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In gathering data for this thesis, I've used a qualitative approach; specifically, the research was based on a qualitative case study that utilized semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Multiple methods, including participant involvement and feedback, were built into the research design in an effort to increase the quality and authenticity of the research findings. Using multiple methods enabled a comparative investigation of the intricacies of human behaviour from more than one angle (Cohen and Manion, as cited in Wellington, 2000).

The analysis and interpretation of data occurred on multiple levels throughout the research process. Theoretically, the findings are grounded in a critical framework that focuses on issues of privilege and equity. Methodologically, the findings are structured by the use of an instrumental case study and by ~~both~~ deductive and inductive methods of thematic analysis. The analysis and interpretation, like all analysis and interpretation, is partial and located.

Qualitative Research

Though qualitative research is difficult to define, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer the following broad definition:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

From this perspective, qualitative research provides a way to study people's lives, learning, and work within the contexts and relationships of power that shape them. Qualitative research also provides methods, compatible with critical pedagogy, for investigating and problematizing educational contexts in which power operates to privilege certain cultures, languages and knowledge.

In examining meanings and processes, qualitative research "stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). The notion of the socially constructed nature of reality was fundamental in my examination of how issues of inclusivity are taken up within preservice teacher education. By identifying the social and political sculpting of what is considered 'knowledge', it is possible to examine attempts to disrupt the exclusivity found within sites of formal education. The use of multiple qualitative methods allowed me to explore one such attempt at disrupting exclusivity, in a thorough and focussed manner. Qualitative methods were particularly useful in examining specific tensions, resistance, pedagogical strategies and successes experienced by the research participants involved in my case study. The detail and depth afforded by qualitative research provided valuable insight and perspectives garnered from lived experience. Such insight provides a useful contribution to the emerging body of literature on inclusive education and to evolving attempts within preservice teacher education to address issues of power, difference and equity.

Finally, qualitative methods allowed me to highlight my relationship to the research topic and my interests and biases, enabling transparency of the motivation

that guides my work. Such methods also recognize the situational constraints that impacted and limited my research. An attempt has been made throughout this thesis to discuss these constraints and limitations in each relevant section. A brief discussion of the qualitative methods used in my research, including case study research, interviews, and document analysis, is provided below.

Case Studies

A case study is a detailed examination of an individual, lived scenario in an institution or other sociocultural site and an attempt to extract learning or understanding from that case (Wellington, 2000). The experiential knowledge derived from qualitative case studies can assist in refining theory and suggesting areas for further inquiry (Stake, 2005). While it can be difficult to isolate the specific context of each case, a case must be considered a system with boundaries in order for the researcher to concentrate on understanding the case's complexity (Stake, 2005). In setting a case's boundaries, the researcher is faced with the challenges of isolating certain features and activity patterns and then determining, in a coherent manner, which features and patterns fall within the set boundaries of the case, and which fall outside the case (Stake, 2005). Since not all aspects of the case can be investigated or understood, the researcher must carefully select specific elements of the case on which to focus (Stake, 2005).

The qualitative case study discussed in this thesis is an instrumental one, in which the case is used primarily to generate insight into a broader issue. As Stake (2005) notes, in an instrumental case study, "the case is of secondary interest; it plays

a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case is still looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest" (p. 445). While the intrinsic elements of the case discussed in my research were valuable and unique, they were of secondary interest to my primary research aim of examining issues of inclusivity within preservice teacher education. As Wellington (2000) explains, "The study of a case can be valuable in exploring how general principles are exemplified in practice" (p. 99).

It is important to note that issues of inclusivity are complex and fluid, and thus the challenge of my research has been to provide situated interpretations of how these issues played out within the case study. In developing the case study, data or case records were gathered from interviews, document analysis, and open dialogue with the research participants. As Wellington (2000) notes, "the product of the researcher's immersion in, analysis of and reflection on the case record is the case study itself – the written report" (p. 96).

As with most research methodologies, case studies achieve credibility through triangulating findings and interpretations (Stake, 2005). Multiple methods were used in conducting the case study in an effort to authenticate the findings that came out of the research. Since research can only capture 'reality' through subjective representations, the use of multiple methods serves "as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). Despite all efforts made to triangulate the results for increased authenticity, there are limitations in case studies and this particular case is no exception. This case is

limited by the context and size of the study (location, research participants, etc.), the research questions selected and addressed, and the research methods chosen and implemented. This research is further limited by the human subjectivity of both the research participants and myself, the researcher. Knowledge constructed in this thesis is subject to the honesty, accuracy, and interpretations of those involved in its creation. The authenticity and utility of this research will ultimately be determined by readers, who will bring to this work their individual perspectives and understanding.

Though there are limitations to the generalizability of this case study, there are also valuable findings. This study provides a window into the experiences of several teacher educators involved in teaching inclusive education. Through the revelation of the unique experiences of these participants, readers of this case study may gain "certain insights into the human condition, even while being well aware of the atypicality of the case" (Stake, 2005, p. 456). Further, as Wellington (2000) points out, "the ability to relate to a case and learn from it is perhaps more important than being able to generalize from it" (p. 96).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this research for their potential to provide rich, experiential data that examines an event or issue in the lives of selected respondents (Fontana & Frey, 2005). As Wellington (2000) adds:

> Interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe. We can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives. We can also elicit their version or their account of situations which they may have lived or taught through: his – or her – story. (p. 71)

In the case study discussed in this thesis, the interview methodology I chose was intended to elicit the research participants' experiences of instructing, or being involved with, a mandatory inclusive education course for preservice teachers.

The interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of five research participants. A purposive sample, as Stake (2005) explains, is used in qualitative research for the dual purpose of "building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study" (p. 451). The selection of the interviewees was made on the basis of their involvement, as educators, with a mandatory inclusive education course at one Canadian post secondary institution.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format with the five research participants. A semi-structured format was selected to provide some structure, but also allow for flexibility in the interview process (Hammer & Wildavsky, 1989). One interview guide was developed and used with the course instructors (see Appendix A), and a second interview guide was developed and used with the Dean of Education (see Appendix B). Both interview guides contained twenty-one questions, most of which were open-ended in structure, with a few closed questions interspersed. The interview guide used with the Dean of Education was slightly different from the one used with the four instructors because of his differing role in relation to the inclusive education course. All research participants were sent an interview guide at least a week in advance of their interviews.

The interviews ranged in duration from thirty-seven minutes to seventy-five minutes, depending on the comfort level and time commitments of the research participants. The interview location and time was set by each research participant

within selected dates agreed upon by the researcher and research participants. All five research participants chose their workplace, Cook University College, as the interview location for reasons including comfort, convenience and time efficiency.

In keeping with my critical theoretical framework, I envisioned the interviews as an active, reflexive research partnership between myself and the research participants. As Fontana and Frey (2005) note, "Interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results" (p. 698). In an effort to achieve a partnership with the research participants, I attempted to build rapport with each participant, based on my familiarity with the research context (the post secondary institution), with the subject matter (inclusive education), and, in most cases, with the research participants themselves. In addition to establishing rapport, I encouraged participant engagement and feedback throughout the research process.

Despite their many benefits, semi-structured interviews have potential drawbacks with regards to the authentic representation of the interview data. As Hammer and Wildavsky (1989) caution:

> The open-ended semistructured interview is both a snare and an opportunity. It is a snare for those who mistakenly believe they already know what they have come to discover. It can be an opportunity for those who seek to formulate and reformulate ideas through disciplined communion with their subject matter. (p. 94-95)

Due to the potential for distortion, technological support, participant feedback and transparency regarding my theoretical grounding and framework were built into the research design in an effort to capture and represent the data as authentically as possible.

Document Analysis

Document analysis utilizes secondary sources for gathering and triangulating research results (Wellington, 2000). As Peräkylä (2005) notes, "much of social life in modern society is mediated by written texts of different kinds" (p. 870). It is, therefore, not surprising that texts have long been important sources of data in qualitative research (Peräkylä, 2005). Document analysis is particularly important in allowing a researcher to "see the way an organization portrays itself in print" (Wellington, 2000, p. 71).

The case study discussed in this thesis utilized a range of documents, including web pages, correspondence in the form of emails and letters, textbooks, course outlines and assignments, statistical summaries and interview transcripts. Documents were gathered throughout the research process, as they became available or necessary in supplementing or supporting the research findings. As the research progressed, documents were used for a variety of different purposes. Wellington (2000) provides the following explanation of the supplementary research benefits of documents:

> Documents can be of value at different stages of research and can be 'brought in' to the research process for different purposes: to open up and explore a field; to complement other research approaches and methods; and to conclude or consolidate research, including the enrichment of the final process of writing up and publishing. (p. 114)

Early on, documents were used to provide insight into educational theory, research methodologies, the subject area, and the research context. Later in the research process, documents were used to clarify and expand the interview data and to

highlight the policy and practice of the inclusive education course at the centre of the case study.

Though it comprised a relatively small portion of the overall study, document analysis was critical in the development of both the technical and theoretical aspects of this thesis. Perhaps more importantly, document analysis provided another source of data with which to compare, contrast and authenticate the research findings.

As with all forms of research, document analysis is open to multiple interpretations, and, as Silverman (2000) cautions, "every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" (p. 825). Document analysis, therefore, is not the revealing of a document's universal meaning; rather it is the "mediation between the frames of reference of the researcher and those who produced the text" (Wellington, 2000, p. 117). This research is further mediated by those who read it and bring their own frames of reference to the work.

Research Ethics

While there was no perceived risk or threat of harm to the research participants involved in this case study, efforts were made throughout the research process to obtain the informed consent of the participants, to ensure data accuracy, and to maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality.

Informed Consent

The informed consent of research participants was obtained by providing potential research participants with full details of the purpose and nature of my research, orally and in writing, prior to consent being obtained. Once potential

participants were informed of my research intentions, they were invited to sign a consent letter to participate (see Appendix C).

At the beginning of my study, and during the data gathering stage of my research, participants were informed and reminded of their right to withdraw or opt out of the research, without penalty, at any time during the data-gathering process and up until one month following their reviews of the interview transcripts.

Accuracy and Confidentiality

To increase accuracy, a digital recording device was used, in addition to the researcher's notes, to gather data from the semi-structured interviews. Once the interviews had been transcribed, they were sent to each participant for review. Participants were encouraged, once again, to participate in the construction of the data by making alterations and/or additions to the existing transcripts. Though anonymity could not be guaranteed, efforts were made throughout the research process to maintain participant confidentiality. Specifically, the following steps were taken with regards to participant confidentiality:

1. Pseudonyms were used for all names discussed in the research, including the names of the research participants and the post-secondary institution at which the research occurred.
2. Research participants were given the opportunity to alter or delete any aspect of the transcribed interview that they felt compromised their anonymity and confidentiality or didn't accurately represent their intentions.

3. The interviews were held in locations agreed upon by the research participants and the researcher to ensure that the research participants felt comfortable and secure.
4. Only I, the principal researcher, and my supervisor had access to the data, and I was the sole transcriber of the interviews.
5. The interview tapes and all related data will continue to be stored in a secure location and all raw data will be deleted within 5 years of the completed research.

Research Context

The case study was conducted within the Education Faculty of an urban university college in south-western Canada. To maintain confidentiality, the pseudonym Cook University College will be used in place of the university college's actual name.

Cook University College is located in an urban setting with a surrounding population of approximately 75,000 (BC Stats, 2005). When compared at a provincial level, the region surrounding Cook University College is characterized by high rates of single parent families (~30%), elderly dependency (~25%), population growth (~1.5% annually), and both adults and children receiving income assistance (~1%) (BC Stats, 2005). With respect to the rest of the province, the region has average rates of income dependency on the primary sector (~10%), postsecondary completion (~60%), unemployment (~3%), and people who identify as Aboriginal (~5%). The

region has low rates of people who are classified as visible minorities (~6%) and low rates of serious crime (~12 offences per 1,000 population) (BC Stats, 2005).

Cook University College has been operating for approximately 40 years and currently grants undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as numerous diplomas and certificates (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006). Cook University College enrols approximately 10,000 full time students annually, with international students making up about 10% of the total student body (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006).

The Education Faculty at Cook University College offers both a post-degree and a concurrent degree education program, enrols approximately 400 full-time students annually, and employs approximately 35 instructors and numerous other administrative staff and practicum supervisors (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006). The Education Faculty at Cook University College was selected as the research site of the case study because it contains a course on inclusive education that all education students are required to have successfully completed prior to graduation. This requirement, as part of an undergraduate education degree, is relatively unique within the Canadian context.

Inclusive Education Course

The inclusive education course at Cook University College, implemented in 1998, is a two credit, mandatory course taken by preservice teachers in the final term of their education program (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006). The course description, taken from the university college's calendar,

describes the course as "An exploration of strategies for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, including those who are at risk of exclusion in the classroom" (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996-2006). The course structure and content has varied depending on the course instructor. The course has been offered as both a credit/non-credit course and as a graded course. The course has been offered in a variety of time slots ranging from three to seven weeks.

Research Participants

Five research participants were selected for the case study, based on their current and past involvement with the inclusive education course at Cook University College. One of the research participants was the College's Dean of Education who had been involved in the initial approval and development of the inclusive education course. The Dean had also been responsible for the hiring and the supervision of the course instructors. The other four research participants were instructors in the College's Education Faculty; all had taught the inclusive education course at Cook University College at some point since the course had been implemented.

Two of the research participants, one of whom was the Dean of Education, were male. The other three research participants, all instructors, were female. None of the five research participants belonged to a visible minority. As mentioned previously, pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis, when discussing the research participants, in an effort to maintain confidentiality. A brief description of each research participant is provided below.

Dave

Dave had taught in the Faculty of Education at Cook University College for nearly seventeen years at the time the research was conducted. He had been the Dean of Education at Cook University College for the last eleven of those years. Dave was involved in the development, implementation, approval and supervision of the inclusive education course within the Education Faculty. Dave was nearing retirement at the time the research was conducted.

Marlene

Marlene had taught in the Faculty of Education at Cook University College for more than ten years at the time of the research. Her primary area of instruction centered on educational leadership, assessment, teaching and research. Marlene had taught the inclusive education course for two years, approximately five years prior to the case study. The first year Marlene taught the inclusive education course, she taught it on her own, and the second year Marlene team-taught the course with her colleague Andrew.

Andrew

Andrew had taught in the Faculty of Education at Cook University College for approximately fifteen years at the time of the research. His primary area of instruction was Social Studies, Career and Personal Planning, and anti-oppressive pedagogies. Andrew taught the inclusive education course for a couple of years, approximately four years ago. The first time Andrew was involved with the course, he team-taught it

with Marlene. Following his experience team-teaching the course, he taught the course on his own for another year.

Judy

Judy had taught in the Faculty of Education at Cook University College for more than ten years at the time of the research. Her primary area of instruction centered on anti-oppressive pedagogies addressing issues of gender, sexuality, culture and ethnicity. Judy has been the primary instructor of the inclusive education course since its implementation in 1998. Judy took a few years away from teaching the course, about five years prior to the interview. Marlene and Andrew taught the course in Judy's absence. At the time the research was conducted, Judy was just returning from a one year sabbatical, during which time Sarah taught the inclusive education course.

Sarah

Sarah had taught in the Faculty of Education at Cook University College for just less than a year at the time of the research. Sarah's academic area of expertise was in measurement and evaluation. At the time of the research, Sarah had been hired on a temporary basis to cover Judy's sabbatical leave. Sarah had taught the inclusive education course four times in the two semesters of the previous academic year.

Participant Engagement

One objective in conducting this research was to involve my research participants as much as possible throughout the process. I attempted frequent contact

with all research participants, through email and occasionally by phone, mail, and in person. All research participants were kept informed of the research objectives and timeline, and they were invited to provide suggestions, feedback, and interpretations throughout the research process. Following the interviews, each participant was provided with the interview transcript and was encouraged to make additions, deletions or changes, as they saw fit, so that the data authentically captured their narratives and interpretations of the subject matter.

Regardless of researchers' intentions, the relationship they have with their participants depends on the effort put forth by all parties involved. Thus, the level of my engagement with my research participants varied from minimal to maximal. While some participants maintained contact through phone and email, and provided input and feedback throughout the research process, others participated in the interview only. While I strongly believe the greater the engagement, the richer the research, I recognize the time and effort required in being involved in the research process as well as the varying responsibilities various participants assumed in their daily lives. All participants shared their unique experiences and perceptions during the interviews, contributions without which this thesis wouldn't have been possible.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Wolcott (1994) identified three methods for dealing with data: description, analysis, and interpretation. Description involves attempting to present the data as close to its original form as possible, allowing the data to speak for itself. Analysis, according to Wolcott, builds upon a descriptive account and proceeds in a "careful,

systematic way to identify key factors and relationships among them" (p. 10). Interpretation extends what has been systematically analysed. Wolcott explains:

> The goal is to make sense of what goes on, to reach out for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis. It is not entirely unknown for interpretation to be both starting point and culmination for qualitative inquiry. (pp. 10-11)

The synthesis of my data involved some description, but mainly analysis and interpretation. Though these concepts are distinct, they often overlap and are mutually dependent in my work.

In the synthesis of my data, the following three principles, based on the work of Tesch (as cited in Wellington, 2000) were also important guidelines:

1. Analysis doesn't just occur at the end of the research; it occurs throughout the process.
2. The process of analysis is systematic, comprehensive and dynamic.
3. Data synthesis is a reflective and eclectic activity; there is no single correct way to do it.

Theoretical Foundations

My critical theoretical framework fundamentally impacted every aspect of this case study, from the way I approached and understood the data to the themes upon which I focussed my analysis. The underlying premise of my critical framework is that racialized, sexualized, classed, and gendered educational spaces remain largely intact within all levels of Canadian schools. In line with this premise, issues of educational equity, power and privilege strongly influenced the motivation, structure

and findings of this thesis. By engaging critical pedagogy, and elements of both border pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy, this thesis examines the challenges and successes of one attempt at addressing educational inequities through providing a course on inclusive education to preservice teachers.

In addition to providing the framework for this study, critical pedagogy informs the assumptions I've made in my overall analysis. My first assumption is that Canadian teacher education programs typically prepare their students to integrate into the Canadian public school system. My second assumption is that both the Canadian public school system and the education programs that supply its teachers typically work to perpetuate the status quo, a status quo in education that privileges some students and excludes others.

The inclusive education course investigated in this case study works, in varying degrees, to motivate students to rupture the educational status quo in an effort to reduce inequities occurring within the school system. The method employed in the inclusive education course is praxis or informed action as a result of consciousness-raising. The success of this course hinges on many factors involving its structure, composition and evaluation. More significantly, the success of the course stems from the actions and roles of the course participants, namely administrators, instructors and students. The successful rupturing of the educational borders that contain and reproduce cultural power and privilege involves more than just well intended efforts towards consciousness-raising. Successful inclusive education involves motivating genuine student commitment to behaviour change and to purposeful action on issues of inclusivity.

Methodological Foundations

Methodologically, my selection of an instrumental case study, involving interviews and document analysis, also impacted the structure of the analysis. Stake (2005) elucidates the reason:

> The methods of instrumental case study draw the researcher toward illustrating how the concerns of researchers and theorists are manifest in the case. Because the critical issues are more likely to be known in advance and to follow disciplinary expectations, such a design can take greater advantage of already-developed instruments and preconceived coding schemes. (p. 450)

While previously identified critical issues and coding themes were used in my data analysis, new themes and issues arose out of the data and were incorporated into the research findings. An in-depth examination of my thematic analysis occurs in the next chapter.

INTERTEXT V – PARTICIPANT NARRATIVE

"You really need to intentionally attend to issues like gender, race, sexism and homophobia, in order to address things. The best of intentions aren't enough. You need to understand the complexity of those systems, schemas, structures - whatever you want to call them. You really need to understand, in order to make a change. It's like the default on a computer. If you don't do something different, it will always default back to the status quo. You have to be really vigilant all the time. I feel that's confirmed when working with these students [preservice teachers]. It would be so easy not to have this [inclusive education] course in place and just to assume that they're good, well-meaning and intending people and that they will take the best interests of their students into account. But that's not enough. You have to be really active to counter or disturb these systems."

CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of this study's data was a multi-faceted process informed by theory and shaped by methodology. Specifically, the research findings regarding the success and limitations of the inclusive education course were mediated through a process of thematic analysis that used both deductive and inductive methods in the generation of several key themes: structural challenges, student resistance, teacher isolation, compromise, pedagogy, student evaluation, the role of administration, and the importance of the course. Some of these themes were broken into smaller sub-themes. The findings presented in this chapter capture a static moment in the dynamic process of data analysis and interpretation, but will continue to evolve through the mediation of the study's readers.

Thematic Analysis

My thematic analysis involved immersing myself in the data (interview recordings, statistical documents etc.), refining the data (coding the transcripts), reflecting on what I heard and read, and categorizing the data. Data refinement and categorization were conducted both deductively, according to pre-established categories based on theory and previous research, and inductively, based on new categories derived from the data directly. As Wellington (2000) explains, "This examination of the categories themselves is an activity of *continuous refinement* [his italics]. Early categories are adapted, merged, subdivided or simply omitted; new categories are developed. New patterns and relationships are discovered" (p. 136).

As part of my effort to represent the data authentically, I use verbatim quotes frequently in my thematic analysis. Verbatim quotes bring vividness to the descriptions and help to illustrate and reinforce the key themes (Wellington, 2000). Though there are overlapping elements between the themes, I felt that the subtle differences between them warranted the unique categories and attention given to each theme.

Findings

The findings that emerged from my thematic analysis are provided below. A discussion of how these findings relate to the literature and the implications of the findings, for educational policy and practice, can be found in Chapter 6.

Structural Challenges

Structural challenges came up frequently in the interviews as a feature impacting upon the success of the inclusive education course. In particular, research participants noted structural challenges relating to the course length, course format, student (preservice teacher) composition, and instructor composition.

Course Length

One structural challenge to the success of the inclusive education course, as identified by some of the research participants, was the short length of the course, precipitated by the relatively few number of credits, and therefore hours, allocated to the course. Dave, the Dean of Education, highlighted what he considered to be the main challenge associated with the course length: "For a large number of people

[preservice teachers], you're really talking about a shift in attitude and how do you actually get at that in a short period of time?" As he observed:

> If this [course] is something you did over a year, my sense is that you could do it really well, in terms of teaching and in terms of the students' experiences. But how would you get the credits needed for that amount of time?

With regards to the course length, Marlene noted: "It was a two credit course, if I remember correctly, so you always had to make tremendous choices about including some things and just not being able to deal with it all." Andrew felt that, in addition to the difficulty of prioritizing content, creating sustained learning was a significant challenge associated with a brief course length. As he explains:

> If you keep that conversation [regarding inclusion] alive it's great, but that's in the context of a two credit course, in the context of a whole year, in the context of a two year or four year program. Now it's hard, because our students are so rushed with so many credits, the biggest challenge is to get them to transfer that out into other dimensions and then transfer it directly into their classrooms, so that they become acutely aware and almost expect exclusionary behaviour to be part of certain aspects of their classroom.

Students, Andrew suggests, are simply "bound by so much time and experience in a certain role that short two hour courses that are introductions to this [inclusion], in and of themselves, are not going to make a deep change."

Course Format

The course format, with regards to course placement and time span, was seen by some research participants as a structural challenge to the success of the inclusive education course. On the topic of course format, Dave noted:

> When the students are taking this, it's their last term. I mean, their minds are on their final practicum and they're thinking "What the heck am I going to do when I get this certificate?" So is it the best time for something like this to

> happen? I don't know. I don't know where you do it. My sense is that there is really no ideal time for this kind of stuff.

Though Dave acknowledged the limits of the course format, he thought it was still worthwhile in the long run:

> Part of the problem is having the course over a six week period. How much is a person going to really be able to process this stuff? But…my pep talk to some of the instructors sometimes is to say "Look, you're not teaching the person so that they can get through their practicum. You're not even teaching the person so they can get through their first year. You're teaching this person so that five years from now, when they're sitting there and they look at a kid, they'll say "Oh that's what that person was talking about [in the inclusive education course]!"…If you plant a seed with a person and just raise a doubt with a person, then as they're working with kids, when they're ready, they'll start to say "Oh, I wonder about…"

Marlene pointed out that due to the short course length, establishing trust was difficult:

> It's an interesting situation, when you sort of pick up a group in a very short time span, to try to create the sense of trust [so] that you can go below the superficial levels, in terms of how people respond in the discussions. It was a very fast paced setting because you start and six weeks later it's over, and there are many other courses, extensive other courses, that they are dealing with at the same time…To have that sense of trust and to actually work through the emotions etc., I think that's hard to do in a class that's careening along at the speed of light.

With regards to the course format, both Judy and Sarah raised issues regarding its time span.

> The course, last time I taught it, was collapsed from a six week course into three weeks, so it was very, very intense…In the three week course, people were really tired. They lost their steam and their energy. The six week one, the way I like to run it, works better, because it allows more time for reflection, for development, and for things to change. (Judy)

> I thought four [weeks] was too short to really get somewhere. There is a lot of that delayed awareness that came to the students in the six week one. It was like the next week, they'd get it. It took time to process. It took time to sink in and make connections [with] their own lives and other experiences. (Sarah)

Preservice Teacher Diversity

Most research participants saw student (preservice teacher) enrolment, not relating to numbers but rather to minimal diversity, as a structural challenge to teaching inclusive education. Dave, who acknowledged that the lack of student diversity was an issue within Cook's education program, and consequently within the inclusive education course, described the 'Access Initiative' that had been put in place within the Faculty of Education in an attempt to address the issue. The 'Access Initiative,' outlined in the 2007 Cook University College calendar, states that to qualify, applicants must outline membership in a particular group that has "historically been under-represented in the teaching profession" in the province and that has "confronted identifiable barriers to post-secondary education." According to Dave, out of 200 recent applicants, applying to fill 68 seats, 18 or 19 applied under the 'Access Initiative' and most were admitted into the program. He commented:

> I think it's a good strategy to be honest. I wouldn't have supported it if I didn't. Other institutions have said "We'll have a 5 % [diversity admittance policy], so we'll give 5% of the student spots admitted to Aboriginal people." But then you start naming. So 5% Aboriginal, 5% this and 5% that, and I guess my sense was, we'll let the person make the case.

On the topic of student diversity, Marlene pointed out the hypocrisy of not having more intentionally inclusive enrolment policies to match the ideals promoted in the inclusive education course. She remarked:

> The teacher education programs, and I believe this is the case across the province, tend to [include] white, middle-class, female students, with a minority of other ethnicities. We probably need to be much more proactive in encouraging and in demonstrating that whole notion of inclusivity, in terms of the future teachers that we welcome into the program. There's a huge concern that, for example, for First Nations people to become teachers, it can be a road that's a very difficult one and I absolutely think that we need to address those issues. Not just talk about what should be happening in the K-12 system, but

> what should be happening in future teacher programs to encourage and to represent more truly and fairly our society because the demographics in our teacher education programs do not represent society.

Marlene also felt that there was a lack of attention given to the unique backgrounds of the students who were accepted into the program:

> One of the areas that's always a concern to me is that we bring in people in third year, or in post-bac, after completion of a degree program, and we do some work on the kinds of skills and background they bring in but it's very, very little. We really preach to our future teachers that they do pre-instructional assessments so that they really thoroughly know the learners and then build a program to suit those learners, and yet I don't think that we attend enough to the skills, the backgrounds and the strengths of the people coming into the program…I don't feel that we incorporate enough of that into how we structure the program - enough of acknowledging some of the experiences that people have had prior to starting the teacher education program.

Andrew echoed the concern that preservice teacher diversity at Cook University College isn't reflective of the population of students in the local classrooms, as he felt it should be. He found that when there was a diversity of students within a class, it was much easier to get at issues of inclusivity because they came up more often and didn't have to be fabricated. He observed:

> Of two classes that I was central to with the post-bacs, one class was absolutely homogenous in terms of its visibility, in terms of socio-cultural [makeup], and that's a class of 34 people - not one was a person from a visible minority. In the other class there were 6. And in that class with 6, when security and safety were built within the class, those 6 people spoke out really personally about their experiences. They felt it was safe to reveal their attitudes - what happened to them in high school or public school or elementary school when they were walking through those different challenges. Again, the personal stories of people in their midst is what brings people's consciousness up…So right now we are just at that turning point or maybe it's even a tipping point where, as the diversity builds [in the region], people can no longer stay in their shells. They can no longer kind of see themselves as the dominant culture because there's no such thing anymore. But in our program it seems like it's alive and well - the dominant culture.

Andrew felt that more proactive measures had to be taken to encourage greater diversity in preservice teacher enrolment, particularly where First Nations students were concerned. He indicated that despite some efforts to increase First Nations enrolment, Cook's education program is still seen by some local First Nations people "as a terrifying place for somebody who's been excluded and marginalized for most of their lives and whose identity is not that of a person that can succeed in such a place."

With regards to the backgrounds of the students in the inclusive education course, Judy pointed out that there was more diversity, particularly regarding socioeconomic status, among the Post Baccalaureate students than among the Concurrent Degree students. She noted that, despite this, the overall representation of students from diverse ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation and ability backgrounds was low.

Sarah, too, raised the issue of the lack of preservice teacher diversity within the education program. She felt that it was a challenge to address the topic of oppression to "a population that, in general, aren't oppressed on a large scale." She noted that there were a couple of visibly diverse students within her classes who "shared little stories" but, particularly in one of her classes, didn't speak a lot because they didn't feel it was safe to do so. Sarah said that the students who didn't feel comfortable to speak up in class shared their thoughts through the written assignments in the course. As a result, only Sarah benefited from their sharing.

Faculty Diversity

The issue of limited faculty diversity was raised by most research participants as a structural challenge to inclusive education. In terms of faculty, Dave commented, "There has been so little turnover in this faculty that there has not been diversity hiring, so it's a pretty homogenous faculty. There are some racial backgrounds within the faculty that people aren't aware of and faculty don't advertise it." He further noted that the small faculty of Cook University College eliminated the possibility of having more than one instructor for the inclusive education course. He explained:

> Ideally, you'd have this kind of a course in a larger program where somebody could attach to a faculty member that they trusted, who was going to lead them through this experience, and then if you like person X, you could attach to them or if you like person Y, you could attach to them.

On the issue of faculty diversity, Marlene noted: "We don't represent the range of demographics in society. No. And we should. We should at least be working towards that." Judy, too, echoed these sentiments. She remarked: "We haven't done a lot of intentional hiring or posting out…We're having that discussion now, so that might come in. There is definitely room for it - absolutely. We all look like we came out of the same mould."

In discussing the Education Faculty backgrounds at Cook University College, Andrew explained that he felt that the minimal faculty diversity created a barrier to addressing and modeling inclusivity effectively within the education program. "We finally now have one person of a non-dominant culture after 15 years," he noted.

> Until we have more people from different backgrounds - from backgrounds of poverty, from backgrounds of sexual preference difference, backgrounds of socio-cultural roots, from all the sources of diversity - unless we have those representations, we will not have people consciously infusing that perspective into every decision we make.

Student Resistance

The most dominant theme that arose out of the interviews, was that of resistance, a resistance directed towards both the theoretical and ideological components of the inclusive education course.

Theoretical

In discussing the inclusive education course, some participants noted experiencing student resistance to the theoretical constructs covered in the course. Marlene reported that preservice teachers often have "a very strong practice ethos" and are resistant to content and topics that don't have, what they perceive, as immediate applications. Marlene felt that this ethos develops out of a lack of previous exposure to theory. She explained:

> We don't emphasize a lot in our program, the theoretical constructs…and the history or the reasons behind what we're doing. It's a program that's very much focused on the moment and on classroom practice. There are some real strengths with that, but there are some drawbacks. When you work into…the history…or…philosophical or theoretical constructs, and if people haven't had a chance to work with that and to say that that's an important use of their time, then there tends to be a resistance to using time for those purposes.

In addition to the lack of previous exposure to theory, Marlene spoke of the disconnect between theory and practice:

> I think we also need to think about the praxis a bit more. It has been a program that has been loaded towards the practical, in some ways over much, and we don't necessarily place that within the theoretical constructs. Or we'll teach the theoretical constructs in the Child Development course and they're not thoroughly enough connected to the curriculum that's developed in the methodology courses. That's one place that I really think that we need to make intentional connections. I think we have to resist that kind of tyranny of the moment that "If it isn't a practical strategy that I can incorporate on Monday, I'm not interested in it."

Judy also spoke of the practical bias of many of the preservice learners. She commented: "The more pragmatic oriented ones want strategies and teaching materials, and the other ones see that this kind of course will determine how they teach, and they appreciate it. It's a real division." Judy found the students particularly unenthusiastic about the component of her course in which she explores theories associated with the provincial history of education. Despite their reluctance, Judy felt this topic was important. She explained:

> I struggle with that because that's something that I believe in quite a bit - to get the basis, the foundation - and to see how arbitrary these oppressive systems are in our province and in contemporary or relatively recent times. It's not like this was a thousand years ago.

In an effort to engage the students in the theoretical components of the course, Judy tried, as much as possible, to make the course activities experiential:

> I really wanted them to have an experiential understanding of what those systems [sex-gender, racism, homophobia] look like and how subtle they are. Student teachers tend, as you know, to be really oriented towards strategies and practical applications, so I always try to move it over to that realm, that more pragmatic place, but always based on experience - their own personal experience.

Ideological

Ideology was a significant source of resistance in the teaching of the inclusive education course at Cook University College. In exploring each research participant's experience of resistance, I provide some background information where necessary, as to how each instructor approached the course, so as to highlight how resistance varied according to such variables as the course content, activities and instructor.

As Education Dean, Dave was never directly involved in the instruction of the inclusive education course. As an observer of the course, however, he noted that he

had seen ideological resistance from preservice teachers surface frequently in response to the notion of educational *equity*, as opposed to *equality*:

> I've been quite intrigued by the fact that I'm seeing more and more of an attitude of equality meaning sameness…I just think that's conceptual nonsense. So part of the struggle, I think, for a person teaching this course is to bring that to the fore. I mean why would we all expect to be treated the same? Why would we think that treating everyone the same is really going to help them do what they need to do? And part of it is helping people understand what the job of 'teacher' is. Our job as teachers is not to be a voice of the state. It is to try and help our kids gain an understanding and skills, and all that stuff that our society believes to be of value, and we have to help interpret that in the context of each individual kid. So it's an extremely complex job.

Dave had also observed that the instructors had to be very careful how they approached the course topics and the timing of their approach. He cautioned:

> There are a couple of layers happening at once. One is what the topic is, and I've seen people focus on sexual preference, I've seen them focus on racial issues, socio-economic issues, etc. So I've seen them use those as themes. My sense of what was actually going on was that the themes were used just to focus attention and really what it was, was to try and help people understand "What are my attitudes towards other people?" and "What kind of impact can attitudes, such as the ones maybe I have, have on other people?" and "How does that relate to kids' learning?" And so the top part, the topic part, I've seen as really just an excuse to get at other things. I've seen attempts to sort of skip the top layer and get down and I've seen that be an extremely difficult thing to manage as an instructor. It's just such a threat to people to be naming that, that they react in ways, like just shutting down.

As an administrator, Dave saw most student resistance manifest itself in poor faculty evaluations and in course complaints and appeals. He commented: "The faculty members do get hammered on this course. They really get critiqued by students very consistently and regardless of style, personality and everything else. They constantly get a bad rap from a few." Despite the poor faculty evaluations and student complaints it provoked, Dave felt that ideological resistance was symbolic of the course's success. He explained:

> The groups of students coming to me, it's fairly regular, and you know the way I see it is, and I've told the instructors this, I see it as a sign that it's working. I mean, you are causing these students some discomfort. And that's part of the reason why I see this course as being somewhat vulnerable within a faculty, because some people really have the sense that we need to be there to be supportive; supportive meaning that the students should feel good and if the student feels good then they should be giving off good vibes and they shouldn't be upset, etc. This course is exactly the opposite. If you're being successful in this course, you're making people really think about things that they don't want to think about and you're making them recognize that there are things they are going to have to do, as a teacher, which may be hard for them to swallow…So in some cases it's a denial of very strongly held beliefs. It's saying to them "Your job in the classroom is to help every kid and no kid should feel excluded in any way."

Marlene's focus, as course instructor, was to address issues of inclusivity through consciousness-raising. She clarified: "The intent was, I believe, that some of the issues be made more conscious, that they [students] become more conscious of some of the areas of inclusion and exclusion." Marlene explained that the time frame of the course limited her comfort level with exploring issues at an emotional level:

> I'm trying to think if we went into how people felt about those issues themselves in depth and I can't say…that it was in depth. I think there were the preliminary discussions. That's very much different than having people openly talk about real issues of being excluded themselves.

With regards to the topics she chose to address, Marlene noted:

> My beginning point was the inclusion, not the exclusion. I started with a whole set on community, on how we develop classroom community, how we structure it so that people feel that there is a place in which they can participate. And that was part of my concern, that we not go just to the fragmentation in terms of exclusion, but that we look at how we create the notion of classroom community and the collective.

Marlene also explored the history of education (on a provincial level), bullying, and music (songs about inclusivity in various languages) within the inclusive education course. She acknowledged that the one area related to inclusion that she didn't directly address in the course was sexual orientation:

> That, I think was one of my weaknesses. I provided readings and materials from, I think it's GALE, Gay and Lesbian Educators. I provided a set of materials and readings from the group, but I didn't directly address those issues in the classroom and I should have.

Marlene reported that some students complained about the lack of direct attention given to issues related to sexual orientation.

Overall, Marlene indicated that she couldn't remember a lot of direct ideological tension or resistance when she taught the course. She did note that there was some resistance to the section of the course in which the history of education in the province was explored from multiple perspectives. With regards to how Marlene responded to this resistance, she commented, "We worked it through. It was a jigsaw situation, and in most cases future teachers feel better about that because they get to benefit from the understanding of three or four other people by contributing their part to it." Marlene stated that her strategy was to minimize the time spent on the topic, while maximizing the learning.

Andrew approached the course by trying to provide experiential activities that impacted students on an emotional level. He explored the history of education within the province, as well as issues of inclusion/exclusion related to ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and sexual orientation. As with Dave, Andrew noted that almost 50% of the preservice teachers who entered the course saw the classroom "as a very fair, equitable place" and believed that treating all students the same (equality) is the best approach to teaching. He noted that when students learned about both personal discrimination as well as examples of institutionalized discrimination, they often responded defensively:

> People get a picture of what our province has done, and we've come a long way, but we've still got a long way to go. Again it's that whole critical analysis of our society. It's not to say we're bad or wrong. People [students] say "If I do this then I'm going to be running around with guilt from all the wrongs of previous generations" and "Aren't we past that?" and "Why do I have to carry the guilt? What am I supposed to do, apologize to every bloody Indian I meet on the street?" I mean that's kind of their language. And I say "No that's not it. It's how do we become a better society, become a vigilant society?" If we make an assumption that everything is fine, that there is no place we can move to get better, then we will get worse. There's no such thing as equilibrium. Even if you think we've arrived, which I personally don't, we will not stay at that arrival point for very long before we slip back into really discriminatory behaviour.

In addition to defensiveness, Andrew noted that resistance within the course also took the form of silence. Andrew felt that silence was a very difficult form of resistance to deal with because, without honest dialogue, he didn't feel there was much to work with. He reasoned:

> When there's honesty we can get into telling each other's stories and get a deep appreciation for why people have come to their world views and orientation…I want our students to really examine their own backgrounds and how those backgrounds have shaped their world views and how their limitations have impinged upon how they are going to interact with that child who may be really different from themselves.

Though Andrew felt the students seemed responsive to the course materials on equity, inclusivity, etc., he questioned whether some of the students experienced a sustained attitude change. He explained:

> Students will come and say "You know [Andrew], don't take this personally, but even with all of the experiences we're having and the readings we're doing, people talk the talk in the classroom, but outside there are the racist jokes, the sexist jokes, and all the stuff that spins out about First Nations, about biases and about stereotypes about gays and lesbians." That just tells me that we've got way more work to do that can ever be done within this course. So the sceptical side of me asks whether, within such a curriculum, we're preaching to the converted and just putting those others into a holding pattern for a period of two or three credits. I hope that a percentage, and maybe we're talking 50/50, of those people who are really resistant to moving outside of their very fixed ethnocentric, or ethnosocio-cultural frame, can move to a

> point of saying "Oh yah, maybe I don't get it. Maybe as a majority person of both color and socio-cultural orientation and ethnicity, maybe I don't get it."

With regards to why students were so resistant, Andrew commented:

> Unless the student teachers have experience personally with the act of exclusion in any deep way, unless they've been a minority - if we're talking about socio-cultural difference - unless they've had gender differences or sexual preference differences, unless they've been inside of gender battles or unless they've experienced what it's like to have a physical disability, they have real problems moving to the point of empathy.

Like Andrew, Judy's focus for the course was exploring the issues of educational oppression, hegemony and power differentials, on an emotional level. She said that one of her main objectives for the course was "to convince people that inequities still exist in our society." She elaborated:

> That was a really huge thing - trying to impart what these systems look like: the sex-gender system; the construct of race and racism; homophobia – how those things are constructed and how complex, complicated, and subtle those systems are…That's a really hard thing for people to understand.

Judy felt it was difficult for students to understand inequities because of the deeply ingrained ideological frameworks with which they entered the course. She explained:

> I would say a large percentage believe that there is complete equality in the world and that if First Nations kids, Aboriginal kids, don't make it in the school system, it's because they're not trying hard enough or they'll even go as far as saying they're lazy and things like that. They don't understand the experience for that First Nations kid or that child from a same-sex partnership.

As with Andrew, Judy experienced significant ideological resistance in teaching the inclusive education course. She found that, overall, there was typically more resistance from the Concurrent Degree students, who tended to come to university right after high school, than from the Post Baccalaureate students, whom she found to be more mature and to have more career and world experiences behind

them. Judy also found that the most resistance arose in addressing the topics of gender and homophobia within the course:

> Once we start talking about homophobia or heterosexism, the students think that is an agenda....So, usually I walk them through it and I say "You know, when we talk about Aboriginal experiences in the classroom, I'm not asking you to become Aboriginal, so why would you think I'm asking you to become homosexual here?" It's an interesting challenge to me... When something conflictual comes up, I just try and deal with it. I put it back to the person and say "Tell me more. Let me hear what you mean by that. What agenda?" Actually, if people challenge me about agendas, I can turn to the [provincial governing body] and all of the obligations of teachers and it's all in writing, in legal documents there to support me.

Judy indicated that the resistance she did experience from the preservice teachers took a variety of forms:

> It looked ugly sometimes. I operate the course by trying to move people's hearts. I try to go in on an emotional level and it gets dicey in there because that's where people hold their values pretty close. So the sort of resistance I experienced was based on things like inexperience - they hadn't witnessed things and they would say, "Well I don't know any gay people so there are no gay people in the school system." Resistance based on religion is also a basis for resistance. People just say "I can't buy this. I can't advocate for supporting same-sex couples because I believe that's wrong. In my religion we say that's wrong." So that would be the basis of some resistance. Inexperience and belief systems would be the basis of resistance.

Judy also discussed seeing resistance through the students' writing and through other behaviours that occurred in the classroom. She noted:

> I get them to do a lot of writing and a lot of what I hope for is real, honest reflection. So I would see resistance in their writing. They would write at length about how what we were doing in the course was wrong, misguided or contrary to their experience and that would be the basis of a lot of it. I'd also see the resistance when they would come and see me in my office and they would cry - someone always cries during the course. I would pick up on resistance by mumbling in the classroom and vibes. Sometimes they would challenge me right in the class. Those are the main ways. And I would hear it in the halls and they would go to [Dave] often and complain...There would [also] be people who would sit there, arms folded, scowling at me the whole time, and I couldn't get anything out of them except for their writing. They had to do lots of writing, so I'd see it there.

Like Marlene's, Sarah's overall focus for the course was raising awareness about the student population at risk due to "biases, prejudice, racism and exclusion based on identifiable factors that are of no control of the individual." Sarah said her main objective for the course was

> To get the students to realize how prevalent [prejudice] is -around them, beside them, in front of them, in the classrooms that they did their practicums in, in the classrooms that they were in as students, as children. To think back and really identify and think about how prevalent it was. It was always there. It is there now, it was there then, and it's going to be there tomorrow…Until they acknowledge it's there, there's no point in telling them tools to fix something they don't even see.

Sarah said that if the students were able to acknowledge how prevalent prejudice and exclusion are within the school system, then she would attempt to go further with them and "hone in on tools and strategies of how to deal with it, once it's identified."

Sarah indicated that at the beginning of the course, when asked, only 2% of the students would say that prejudice and/or racism were prevalent in our society. She acknowledged that until she taught this inclusive education course, she herself, wasn't aware of just how extensive issues of inclusion are within education:

> To be truthful, before I tackled this course syllabus and went through the material, and read and really thought about it, and it's not that I wasn't aware, but I don't think I saw that it was as prevalent as it is, until I really went down this road. So my first time teaching it, was very Vygotskian in nature. I was walking down that road with them the first time through…So they were having these epiphanies and I was having these epiphanies and we were both going "Wow!" together. So my first time through was very much like that, because this isn't an area where I've done research. I haven't taught in this area before, and it wasn't part of my teacher training, so it was new for me. But even though I walked with them, I still guided them. I was a very strong guide for the journey, but we did it together that first time.

Sarah's approach to the course was to guide the students through the material related to inclusion/exclusion, but not to pretend to be an expert or "teach the dogma." She commented:

> Whatever way down the spectrum of expert I thought I became in this material, I still would never teach anybody what they should think or what they should see. It's just about exposure. I just had to expose them, and myself, too, so much that it slaps you hard in the face and you wake up and realize how prevalent it is.

Sarah indicated that she didn't feel she experienced a lot of resistance from the students. In fact, Sarah noted that out of the four classes and about a hundred and twenty students she taught, she only felt there was resistance from a couple of students in one class. Sarah felt, however, that the impact of these resistant students was felt by all the students in the class. She recalled:

> There were a couple of students that were really resistant to feeling guilty for past ills or for past mistakes - which was never ever the intent. It was never brought up, but you can go down that road if you choose to feel guilty about the past. There's no point in that though. We weren't even here. I mean, it was people we didn't even know that this happened with. Talk about the present and talk about what you did today. But there were students who were hanging on to that and who were resistant. There were actually two students in the last section who were resistant and I think it kind of tainted the freedom in that class to really discuss things. But students shared little bits - not the way it could have been. It was just my sense that if I was in that class, the last one, I might have been a bit careful about what I shared. It was just very vocal and a little bit confrontational and if you were feeling vulnerable, you might just choose not to share.

Sarah also experienced an incident in her teaching of the course in which one student "disclosed some things that were of such a dark nature" that she felt "ethically obliged to respond to the situation." Sarah approached the Dean about the incident and arranged to discuss the disclosures with the student in the presence of a counsellor. Sarah recounted:

> It really exploded and was a really awful and volatile situation, but it happened. He crossed into another way of thinking. It was like he forgot he was writing for a course project…So that was a challenge or tension, because you're asking students to reflect on some pretty dark stuff inside their own psyche and personal experiences and you're asking them to write about it. It's a risk. It's a risk or a challenge, I suppose. I mean what should I have done when someone went a little too far? It wasn't too far down that road - it was down a different road actually - but down the same path.

Teacher Isolation

Isolation was a common feeling experienced during the instruction of the inclusive education course, and as Dave observed, this feeling of isolation only compounded the challenge of teaching an already difficult course. He noted: "I've watched instructors work with this course and my sense is that it's a real struggle. I don't see a network of people out there to support this kind of work." He further noted that, despite attempts to take on inclusion as a faculty wide initiative, the responsibility had ended up being shouldered, for the most part, by the instructors of the inclusive education course. He concluded:

> Is it really something that's valued by the faculty as a whole? By every single faculty member? I don't think so. I think it's something that a few faculty have taken on and have done, I think, a really good job of. But is it something that the whole faculty are saying, "You know, we're going to write a line in the sand and we're not going to let this thing go"? I don't think so.

As a result of the inclusive education instructors being left with the bulk of the responsibility regarding issues of inclusion, Dave felt that the instructors ended up feeling somewhat responsible for the overall ethical attitudes, principles and behaviours of the preservice teachers coming through the program. He observed, "It's come back to this course as being the one that very often catches these things

[concerning attitudes, behaviours etc.], and you know, an instructor can only cope with so much of that."

Andrew echoed Dave's concerns about the isolating effect of all the issues relating to inclusivity being left to the inclusive education instructors to address. He noted:

> The very few conversations we have had in our faculty about diversity, about how we bring that up to a broadly conscious level, it's like o.k. [Andrew, Judy] you teach that stuff, you know, so it's taken care of. And we know deep learning doesn't happen that way.

Judy concurred that teaching the inclusive education course could be an isolating experience. She explained: "I feel a little bit by myself, in that where the other faculty are teaching to integrate our students into the system, I'm teaching to, sort of, question the system. So it's not always an easy fit for me."

Compromise

Research participants emphasized the theme of compromise as a lingering element of teaching the inclusive education course. The compromises experienced by participants were most often in relation to their teaching roles, the course intent, the course content and some of the unintended outcomes of the course.

One of the compromises, highlighted by Dave, was that the inclusive education course, in providing a formal platform for addressing issues of inclusion, tended to reduce the likelihood within the faculty of more integrated and collaborative efforts at addressing inclusion from occurring. Dave explained:

> The idea of a single course being the answer, I guess I've seen too often that being grabbed onto as the answer and I don't think that always applies. I think this has served us well; it has forced us to deal with [inclusivity] to a certain

> extent. I'm concerned that it has also given us an excuse not to deal with it to a further extent and that's the risk with the course. But you need to have a person there or you don't do it, so it is a compromise.

A second compromise or risk, raised by Dave about the inclusive education course, was that of further entrenching some students in their exclusionary viewpoints:

> I've seen students, who when they came in, could get by and they would appear to be fairly tolerant people, but when they walked out of this thing you could just see that they had been turned the other way. It's a bit scary when you see that kind of thing.

Part of the reason this concern went unresolved, according to Dave, was that the inclusive education instructors were the only faculty seeing these attitudes surface from the preservice teachers. As such, it was difficult for them to substantiate their concerns, and thus only the most extreme cases of intolerant students were "caught" by the course through the means of evaluation:

> I think in many cases they've [the course instructors] had to really back off what they felt, in their heart of hearts, that they should be doing in evaluation. So the sense I've had, is that while they've seen people that clearly do not understand what we're after here, they haven't been really able to evaluate to a level of rigor where they feel that it would stand up to scrutiny. Once a person appeals, it goes outside the faculty.

Marlene also spoke about compromise associated with teaching the inclusive education course in the context of having to make difficult choices regarding what to attempt to cover. She recalled:

> You're just making tremendous choices about - we have time for this, we don't have time for that, we can do this in depth - and I prefer sometimes to not skim the surface but just to try to do some things in more depth.

Andrew's experience of compromise, in teaching the course, involved his concern about the enduring impact of the course, given the lack of reinforcement of the course concepts in the other educational disciplines. Though Andrew re-iterated

multiple times his belief in the value of the course, he noted that issues of inclusivity should be taken up in a much more intentional and integrated manner to ensure that deep learning of the course concepts occurs. He commented:

> It [the inclusive education course] can provide a catalyst for those people who are so inclined to jump into it and look for different methodologies and ways of working with children but it's not going to change people's attitudes unless it's a broadly and deeply held value that is constantly a topic of conversation.

As with Andrew, Judy had also experienced feelings of doubt, concern and frustration in coming to terms with the impact and intent of the course, as well as with the difficulties inherent in teaching it. Judy said she sometimes wondered if the content would be more suitable at the graduate level and she worried that, while some students understood profoundly the concepts covered within the course, others left the course with only a shallow understanding of the issues. She explained:

> I do think sometimes, in my darker moods, that I'm doing more harm than good because the students can go through this course and think "Oh well, I've been exposed to that material and I wasn't convinced of it, so therefore it still doesn't exist." Or they go through and are exposed to the material, the concepts and the strategies and they think "Yeah, I've done that, so I don't need to attend to that anymore." Unless I get a real commitment at the end of the course from the students, and maybe there was one there to start with, but unless there's a real commitment by the end, I think the course doesn't serve our students well. They can dismiss the issues sometimes.

Regarding the intent of the course and the challenges of teaching it, she reflected:

> One time when I was in the middle of teaching it and there was a lot of resistance, I went and talked to [Dave]. I concluded that that was my role - to stir things up and to have them come out questioning things and not necessarily so happy with the [provincial] school system. To really question their own practice and to understand how easy it is to perpetuate the status quo. And the status quo often isn't really fair or equitable. This has been a hard course to teach. I had to take two or three years off of teaching it because I just had such personal and professional doubts about teaching it. But, I came back to the conclusion that that was my role - to cause a disturbance - and slowly I've started feeling strong and good about that, but it's hard to maintain.

Despite the risks, compromises and, in some cases, delayed impact of the course, Judy felt it was critical to the education program. She remarked:

> I think sometimes it [the impact] will be later, because the issues are so complex, so subtle and so pervasive. It's like that saying about trying to teach a fish to see the water it swims in. It's really difficult. So I try and leave little seeds, or use resources that will leave those seeds. Just plant some things…I get people coming back to me and telling me that they remembered something that happened in the course or that it has made a difference.

Sarah, too, found that there were a few unexpected compromises that she had to face in her experience of teaching the inclusive education course. One area, in particular, involved the context of the practicum placements. Sarah explained that, as a result of the course, most students became aware of the prevalence of exclusion and prejudice occurring within the school system and some students started to see it occurring within their practicum setting, at the hand of their sponsor teachers, which put them in a difficult spot. She elaborated:

> It's a time to do a lot of reflection about it, but I mean, it's such a high stakes experience for them. It's really tricky. I told them that if they wanted to stand up, I'd stand up with them. Or they could just process it and think about it, and do whatever they could in their time with the students to counterbalance it, and then be more aware once they are a certified teacher. And when they go out there, make sure they never do this, and that they are supportive of other students who are in similar situations. It's tricky. It's tough.

Sarah also found that, though unintended, students sometimes felt guilt during and after the course:

> One consequence is that the students might feel a bit guilty. They're forever changed. The insight is not going anywhere. So either they change their ways to match their insight, which is enlightenment, and as teachers I would hope that's where they're going, or they're enlightened and they still chose to kick people on the street and call people names that are of a different color and then they feel guilty. If they feel guilty, I'm not feeling bad for them. I don't have a whole lot of empathy squeezing out of my little heart for that.

Pedagogy

The theme of pedagogy, and, in particular, effective pedagogy for teaching the inclusive education course, was discussed in detail by all the research participants. While each research participant had a unique perspective on what constituted effective pedagogy for the course, all participants felt that using a variety of instructional techniques was important.

Dave endorsed the effectiveness of role plays, guest speakers and texts, though he cautioned:

> I've seen that every strategy that's been used has turned some people, I would say seriously, off, and I would even say probably caused harm and made them worse than they were before they came in. For others, it's been a life changing experience…My sense is that this can be such a powerful learning experience that different methodologies need to be used because it's one where the methodology can get in the way of a person learning.

Marlene discussed the pedagogical importance of doing pre-instructional assessments with preservice teachers, as a method for understanding "the background, the experiences, the strengths, [and] the contributions that they bring" to the course. Marlene also found jig-saw activities and songs that developed inclusive concepts as effective teaching techniques.

Andrew noted the necessity of attending to the classroom climate before raising any issues within the course. He explained:

> A climate of safety and security, first of all, has to be established before any honest conversation can take place. Even when you do establish that honesty, I'm not sure a lot of people feel comfortable with the honesty and because their world views are so antithetical to inclusivity, they're silent in that conversation.

Andrew felt that once a climate of safety and security is established, the most effective teaching strategies for the inclusive education course are those that "evoke

emotion and bring people to a certain level of emotionality, where they begin to feel what it's like to be in that place of exclusion." He added:

> I worry about people delving too long or too hard in just academically defined tenets that I think are powerful…clarifying constructs but without the deep emotionality connected to them, I don't think they'll ever be owned or carried or transferred out of this place.

Specifically, Andrew found film (e.g. the Laramie Project), non-fiction narratives (e.g. the Rena Verk story), literature, guest speakers and experiential learning activities, such as field trips and role plays, to be valuable learning tools within the course. He described one role play activity called Bafa Bafa, which he used in the course and found particularly effective:

> A class [is] split and then trained to two different cultures. And in that experience, for some people who have never been in a minority status situation, they start to get it. They start to find out how quickly their biases become entrenched. And then how their orientations and their affiliation, strong affiliation to a certain group, begin to build just as a result of shared experience. And then having that shared experience come up against a very different world or different set of experiences and what it feels like to be ground up in the cross-fire of two different group orientations. A lot of people, I think, are affected by that and they come out of it with a sense of "Boy this is really quite powerful."

Regardless of the activity, Andrew felt that the most import pedagogical element of any lesson was always the unpacking, challenging, debriefing and questioning of the concepts raised:

> It's trying to shift it from the external to the internal, the self-awareness part…the understanding that each of us have our prejudices, each of us are bound by our experiences and each of us have very deeply held views around what the dominant culture should look like and the power of the dominant culture.

Judy's pedagogical strategy in the inclusive education course was to incorporate what she hoped would be "really sophisticated concepts, of these systems [of oppression], and show how they apply and manifest in the world":

> I would try to use experiential things. I would put them through scenarios or get them to read things or respond to videos or to draw from themselves their responses…I always get them to refer back to their own assumptions in the world…I always put it out there and encourage people that if they have those experiences, to speak, because we're trying to understand from a personal basis. That's a really hard concept to try and get across – the difference between the personal experience of racism and the system of racism. You experience it personally, but it's not a personal thing. It's a bigger than personal thing.

Specifically, Judy used films, role plays, literature, field trips, guest speakers and journals to explore the topics of racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty. Some of the activities Judy felt were important to incorporate, such as having the students wear a GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) button and chronicle their experiences, were met with a lot of resistance. Judy observed: "It's so interesting because they know these systems are operating…but yet they resist sometimes." Her pedagogical strategy in dealing with resistance was to address it directly:

> I would always spend lots of time responding in writing to them. I wrote lots. I'd try to establish a dialogue. If it came out in the class, I'd try to address it and sometimes turn it back to other students. If the students are resisting me and what I'm saying, then I need to pull in some advocates and get other people to say the same things, so I would draw on other students in the classroom. I'd just try and bring it out.

As with Andrew, Judy spoke about the importance of establishing a safe and comfortable class environment and leaving time in each class to "talk with a real focus and to challenge each other." Ultimately, Judy felt it was critical to implement a variety of activities in an effort to reach as many students as possible:

> You can never predict what is going to move a person or what is going to totally bomb with a person…What did I learn?" I guess one of the things is to provide a real variety of experiences and hope that each person is going to be compelled by one of them.

Sarah's overall pedagogical philosophy was to provide the course content without presenting a dogma. She explained:

> I said [to the students] "I am here to see that you know how to think critically. We don't have to agree once this whole term, but I need to know and you need to demonstrate to me, that you're thinking, that you can be critical, and that you can process this. And we never have to agree." So I was really clear with that. And there were students that I didn't agree with on certain things, and I had to really overtly make sure that that was fine at the time…For a lot of it, I didn't direct the discussion, because if I did, then I'd kind of set the tone for where I wanted to go with the topic. So what I consciously tried to do, was present the medium, the media, the visual, the clip, the chapter - whatever it was - present that and without talking. I'd put four discussion question up on the screen. In groups of three, they'd talk for fifteen minutes and go through the questions and then we'd come together as a group and convene. So they'd already processed the information and kind of crystallized, to some degree, what they thought. They'd bantered it back and forth with their classmates, got comfortable with where the flaws in their argument were, and then we came together, where I was now a participant, and we dialogued.

By allowing the students to formulate their thoughts before she became involved, Sarah felt the students were able to be more honest and open about their perspectives. Sarah did note, however, that she was clear about the importance of class discussions and disclosures being appropriate and respectful at all times. She observed: "They all know what respectful means. These are nuances that we're all very skilled at. They couldn't be here if they didn't have a sense of what is appropriate, whether they feel it or not."

Specific pedagogical strategies Sarah used in the inclusive education course included videos, guest speakers, readings, and discussions. Sarah found the most

effective course activities to be role plays with student coaches and a journaling activity called 'prejudice logs'. With regards to the role plays, Sarah commented:

> We did role plays, in an effort to gain some experience on how to verbally confront these issues…They would role play, and some of them would be the 'offensive talkers' and some would be the 'responders'- who were responsible for trying to approach the situation. There would also be two coaches. So they'd go through the role play, take a deep breath, and then the two coaches would give their observations about whether they thought it was an effective response or not. So you might try it again in a different way…We worked on how to speak to someone, so that the result is purposeful dialogue…They really got to practice how to do it, because nobody gives you a chance to practice that stuff.

The prejudice log activity that Sarah found very effective involved the students writing a total of ten journal entries focussed on their reflections around an incidence of prejudice that they had witnessed. Sarah felt that the students were very engaged by this activity, particularly as time went on in the course. She observed:

> At the beginning I know I had eyes rolling and they were going "Here we are, another writing assignment, blah, blah, blah." But once we started to process the material in class, they started to see it. With their prejudice logs, they were writing two each week. For the first couple of weeks they were pretty superficial. By week three, they were getting into something deep, and weeks four and five, there were very, very personal disclosures - many of them were like that. Either they were part of it when they were in grade three, they were part of excluding someone in grade ten or they were excluded in grade seven. They'd tell stories of stuff like that and how it felt. They'd write about the things their parents or grandparents have said - really prejudicial things - and how confusing that is in their brains, when someone they love and adore and accept as a full mentor and guide in life, says something so awful and so racist or so prejudicial. How do they organize that in their heads? So there was a lot of that internal struggle being dialogued.

Sarah noted that, in addition to instigating deep personal reflections, the prejudice logs prompted students to have conversations with their spouses and friends on the topic of prejudice. Sarah also observed that the students, many of whom were friends, became accountable to each other with regards to their own prejudicial comments and

actions and when one of them said something prejudicial, their classmates would point and say "prejudice log!" Sarah indicated that this occurred both inside and outside of the course hours and with students from all of the four classes that she taught. Though Sarah found the prejudice log activity to be effective overall, she described one situation in which a student disclosed some inappropriate material in his log, an incident from which she learned to clarify her assignments:

> To tell you the truth, I felt more careful the next time I taught it. I was a lot more explicit about what was and what wasn't expected and acceptable. When you do anything you learn from it…I couldn't have anticipated that, but you really are protecting the students, and to some degree yourself, by being more explicit.

Student Evaluation

The theme of evaluation came up in various ways throughout the case study interviews. In particular, participants spoke about the challenges of evaluation, given the ideological nature of the course content. In responding to these challenges, participants implemented a variety of evaluative strategies.

From the vantage point of an administrator, Dave described observing considerable strife from the instructors with regards to the course evaluation. He remarked:

> How do you say to a person, "Your attitudes are being entrenched whereas they should be being liberated." How do you describe that? Is it in a reflective journal that they are showing many intolerant attitudes where you can say "Here is the evidence that you're an intolerant person." And a reflective journal is supposed to be something where they can give some thoughts and share it with another person. So it's a really difficult one to deal with and all faculty who have taught this course have found evaluation to be extremely difficult to deal with. They've used pass/fail, they've used letter grades, they've tried a variety of different strategies but I think the essence of it is how do you evaluate somebody else?

Dave also commented on the many grade appeals that have spun out of the inclusive education course. Though he pointed out that the Education faculty had never lost on these appeals, he indicated that the instructors had to be especially careful and rigorous with their assessment practices during this course.

Regarding evaluation, Marlene noted that she had taught the course as both a graded and non-graded course. Her preference for evaluation was the non-graded format: "In many ways, given the content for that course, the non-graded route is better because it gives people more freedom to work with the ideas rather than being worried about the quality of their representation."

Andrew felt that obtaining an authentic evaluation of the objectives of the inclusive education course was a difficult, perhaps even impossible, task:

> I think the tools of evaluation have to be something that get at the values and principles that they [preservice teachers] hold and to get an authentic assessment of that is really, really hard. The only true evaluation of the impact of this course would be to be a fly on the wall in their classrooms as they interact with kids of marginalized status. That's the only way you can evaluate it…To me that's the crux of evaluation, of whether this stuff is really working. It's how they interact, the climate that they engender in their classes, whether there is real attention to the human needs within their classroom - whether they really know their kids and their full backgrounds. And how they, in my view at least, have to be differentiated in their treatment of kid A – Sally- who comes from an upper-middle class home with two parents at home, neither of them drink and/or have had a problem in life and to me that kid for ten months of the year, if you didn't touch her, is going to do fine - compared to the other kid who is coming from an alcoholic background with one parent, a lot of violence, a lot of poverty. To treat those two kids equally, to me, is a crime. And so the true evaluation is how that student teacher goes into that classroom and tries to make real sense of the dichotomy between those two lives and how their practice plays out.

Andrew noted that, of the evaluation tools he did use, he found the most effective to be reflective journals as well as case study evaluations (where students analyzed a classroom incident and discussed how they would have responded to it). While he felt

these tools were sometimes effective at getting at students' attitudes, interpretations and responses to various situations, he cautioned:

> I know certain individuals who could talk the talk. They knew basically what the course was about and they knew academically what was required of their responses. And some of them are very good students intellectually and academically, but on the human side I'm not sure you can evaluate that affective values-based orientation. And that doesn't mean I would never do it again. The course is still worth teaching but I don't know whether we even come close to an authentic assessment and evaluation of what we are really trying to get at in that course - which is, I think, a deep awareness of individual orientation to diversity and second, working with that to develop practice that corresponds with respect for diversity.

Regarding assessment, Judy felt that evaluating inclusive education through a credit/non-credit, rather than graded, format, was critical to the course's success. She explained:

> [Dave] has granted me the real privilege of running the course on a pass/fail system so that I haven't had to grade people...At the end of the course not everyone would get a pass. There would be lots of people who would have to re-do work, complete things or improve things. It wasn't an automatic pass. They did have a lot to do. I've struggled with this every year and in some ways it would be easier to grade it because I'd fit into the faculty better. But I can't quite conceive of how I would do that, if I want honest reactions and honest responses to things, especially around these issues. They're not going to be honest - they'll know what I want and they'll just give it to me.

As to how the students felt about the non-graded evaluation format, Judy noted:

> A couple of years, I've actually asked the students how they feel about that course being non-graded and I get a range [of responses]. I get some people who said they really valued it and it helped them to be open and honest and really delve into how they were thinking. Other people said that, to be honest, they didn't work as hard. But when I think about it, I think about what maintains my integrity and what helps me teach it the way that I can feel comfortable about it. So that's why I push for it.

Of the four instructors, Sarah was the only one who felt strongly about having the course graded on the letter grade system. She explained:

> I've got a master's and a PhD in measurement and evaluation and I'm not giving a pass/fail. It's not going to happen. I don't believe in it. I think there needs to be a variation in grades because there are different levels of effort. Everybody is able to do the 'meets expectations'. If you're here in this program and you've got a degree under your belt, you can meet the expectations. So everybody meets the bare minimum and if you do pass/fail then that's all you have to do to get a pass. So what about the folks who really want to explore and push it and do extra stuff?...I believe in being able to be rewarded or acknowledged for doing more than meets the expectations. I believe in 'exceeds expectations'. It kind of defines me as a person.

In addition to being able to reward effort, Sarah felt that having a letter grade system put more pressure on the students to be prepared for the class discussions on the course readings. She commented: "I believe that students are very concerned with grades and that's not scaring me. I wasn't going to let that push me around. If you're concerned about grades, then work very hard and everything's going to be fine." To confirm that the students had completed the course readings, Sarah gave the students multiple choice quizzes.

Though Sarah said that she didn't get many grade appeals, she indicated that she kept the door open for grade adjustments when students could justify that there had been a measurement error. Sarah noted that she ended up making a few grade adjustments for students who received low participation marks, but came to her to explain that they participated extensively in the small groups but just didn't feel confident or safe to speak in the larger group setting.

The main evaluation difficulty Sarah faced concerned the challenge of evaluating students who were resistant to the course content while still able to meet the course requirements. She noted:

> I had a hundred and twenty students and there were two students who were resistant to the topics. They were nice to me and keen with their projects but their prejudice logs were full of resistance to acknowledging that this stuff is

> real. It was hard to believe that they were still writing that after all the stuff we talked about and all the stuff we watched. So there were two resistant students. I was glad that, as an instructor, I got to see what it really looked like - someone who was really not open to this. It was really not going to happen for them. And they're going to be in a classroom and that's a little unnerving. That's what it is – it's unnerving. But as far as the requirements and the appropriateness in class, it was always there - it was fine. It was nothing blatant. I just felt that my goal wasn't met with a couple of students. I didn't set the syllabus up in such a way that I was going to evaluate that. I evaluated in such a way that I said "You need to do these things and you need to do them in a certain way. You have to reflect, it has to be this long, so many words, and that's how I'm going to evaluate you. Where you really go inside you, is between you and the good lord, if you believe in god." I couldn't control that unless there was something blatantly racist and we could pull them out of the program. But who was really going to share that with me knowing that I'm the instructor?

Role of Administration

The role of administration in inclusive education was a dominant theme in my case study. In particular, the importance of the involvement and support of the Education Dean regarding the inclusive education course was highlighted as critical to the course's success.

As one of the key proponents of the course, Dave, the Education Dean, had been involved in the administrative process of getting the course approved by the governing bodies at both the university and provincial levels. He indicated that it had been a challenge convincing the provincial governing bodies that offering one mandatory course on inclusive education was a different, but potentially very effective, alternative to the approach other institutions had taken in offering multiple optional courses, each on different inclusion issues. He commented:

> This was the hot argument…to say that by doing this we were addressing their concerns and a case had to be made for it. It was not obvious to them because they were looking for a list of courses and the counter that I used, being the

> person who had to be the proponent for this thing, was to say 'Well if we do courses in all of these areas, then a student will get only one of those.'

Regarding his involvement with the course, Dave stated:

> Once the program was put in, really my job was to convince people to teach it [the inclusive education course]. To be very honest, I would argue it's probably one of the hardest courses I've ever seen being taught. So my role, in many cases, has been one of support, of encouragement, and of saying to people "Yeah it's hard. Yeah you've got people rebelling against what you're doing. But it is an important part of what we're doing." And part of what I've had to do as the Dean is to protect it. There are certain courses that really aren't part of the core, or what people perceive as the core, of teacher education and anytime there is financial pressure or if there's a staffing situation, which is literally what is happening right now, people look to those 'softer' courses and say: "Do we really need that? We need Math, but do we really need that other stuff?" So part of my job has been to block that or to try and convince people that yes, this is essential to what we're doing.

Dave also indicated that his role included ensuring that there was enough funding for the course as well as being involved in sorting out timetabling issues arising from field trips and special events. Dave related that one of the inclusive education instructors arranged every year for the students to go to the local First Nations Long House, and so part of Dave's role had been assisting the instructor is shifting around the timetable to accommodate the outing.

Though Dave felt a clear administrative responsibility towards the inclusive education course, he felt that all education stakeholders, including school boards, principals, parent advisory committees, provincial education governing bodies and society in general, should share the responsibility for demanding and ensuring that inclusive education is a priority within preservice teacher education programs. He explained:

> At the end of the day it seems to me that the school system is responsible to ensure that every teacher is including every kid in their classroom. The legislation is very clear that that is the principal's responsibility. A principal

> can and should be held accountable, not that they are particularly, but they should be held accountable for ensuring that every kid in their school is included, honoured and respected by the teachers that work in the school. The school system hires our students, while the [provincial governing body] certifies our students. The school system can say to us "Look, we need to know that this person has grappled with these issues and you need to do it in your program." The [provincial governing body] can say "This is the Standard to become a teacher. To become certified, teachers have to have some sense of how to engage kids so that they feel included in the classroom." That's the pressure on us. I mean we won't get students if our students go out and don't get hired…And what's happening with the Parent Advisory Committees? Are the Parent Advisory Committees demanding that their students are respected? When I talk to people, particularly people who have special needs kids, I mean, they're a very powerful lobby group. But ordinary parents, with kids that are scruffy little kids, I mean the little kid with the runny nose, the poor little kid walking into the classroom, who the heck is going to be his advocate? So, I think it is a systemic issue with respect to society and our society is not unified on this…How can we demand [inclusive education] when it's not being demanded by the licensing bodies.

As the primary and longest instructor of the inclusive education course, Judy was a strong advocate for supportive and involved faculty administration. She noted:

> I think the role they should have, which is in place here, is one of incredible support - just bend over backwards support - because it's a really challenging course. [Dave] has done some outrageous things to support this course and to support me with my faculty sometimes, too. I think that's absolutely mandatory. Unless a person was incredibly strong, stronger than I am and much more confident, you know, who could push through anything, it would be a hard course to teach on your own, feeling all alone.

Speaking of the Dean's advocacy for the course, Judy commented: "[Dave] was really instrumental in ensuring that the focus of this course was given its own place, because it can tend to get on the back burner to the other inclusion issues."

Regarding the Dean's involvement with the course, she pointed out:

> I have had [Dave] come in to introduce my guest speakers from the GALE [Gay and Lesbian Educators] organization and I think in that way he shows his support. He also likes to say a few words [to the preservice teachers]. He says things like "You know, this is maybe the hardest thing you'll have to assimilate in this program, but it's maybe one of the most important things." So he's really, really vocal about that. And when the students go to him with

> complaints or concerns or they're just too disrupted, he's just really supportive.

Overall, Judy felt that having strong and active administrative support for the course was critical to its success. She pointed out, "To create change you need lots of levels working at it. One level won't be enough."

Though other participants didn't speak directly about the role of administration in the inclusive education course, there were indications that all the participants valued the administrative support they had received. In particular, the support of the Education Dean came through in their dialogue about his involvement in advocating for the course, mediating student resistance, and in allowing them flexibility in the design of the course evaluation and activities.

Importance of the Course

Despite the many barriers and limitations to the inclusive education course discussed by research participants, the theme of the course's importance came through in all the interviews. The course's importance was most often correlated with two main factors: its potential, whether realized or not, for filling the inclusivity gap in the education program; and its alignment with the instructor's fundamental principles and desire to disrupt the deep seated inequities in Canadian schools.

Filling the Inclusivity Gap

The 'inclusivity gap' within Cook's education program was raised by all research participants as a significant justification for having a mandatory inclusive education course. Though participants saw the inclusivity gap as the norm within

Canadian education programs, they felt that having a required inclusive education course was an important, and potentially effective, method for filling the gap.

Dave, the Education Dean, indicated that the inclusive education course at Cook University College was developed during the time when the college gained autonomy from its 'parent' university and began granting its own degrees. Specifically, he indicated that it was developed in response to pressure from some faculty who felt issues of inclusivity weren't adequately addressed in the former program. He noted a second pressure behind the course development, stemming from the provincial teacher education governing body, which had put forth a list, in their bylaws, of issues (such as Indigenous issues, gender issues etc.) that need to be addressed in order for a program to be approved. While larger education faculties had addressed the teacher education bylaw by offering a wide variety of elective courses dealing with the issues from the list, Dave indicated that Cook College was restrained with regards to course options due to financial and staffing limitations. More importantly, Dave noted that the faculty at Cook College felt that all the issues were important for students to grapple with and so they opted for implementing one mandatory course on inclusion rather then multiple optional courses on different inclusion issues. In addition to the course implementation, according to Dave, the faculty agreed to emphasize several supporting curricular strands, focussed on the topics of critical thinking, cultural awareness, and inclusion, through all of the courses within the education program.

With regards to the success of Cook College's attempts at filling the inclusivity gap in the program, Dave had mixed feelings. He felt that the faculty

attempt to implement inclusion oriented strands throughout the courses was mostly unsuccessful:

> I would say it [the strands] didn't work, to be honest. I think there was a tendency, and there will always be a tendency, for people to slide back to structures they are used to. So just like we say about student teachers, I mean, how do you end up teaching? You end up teaching the way you were taught. I think it also applies to teacher education. How do you teach teacher education? Basically the way you were taught. So while the faculty was really trying to go on a path that was different…it was, I think, a slide back.

Dave felt, however, that the inclusive education course instructors had been successful in staying true to the faculty's initial vision of ensuring that all students in the program were required to grapple with issues of inclusion, and inclusion, as perceived by Dave, must be broadly defined:

> A kid may be excluded because of the way they behave, they may be excluded because of some disease, but they may also be excluded because of race, or because of socio-economic status or whatever else it is. And the issue is how you ensure that every kid feels included in your class…If there's a child in your class, that child needs to feel included.

Though he noted that there were other ways that inclusivity could be effectively addressed within education programs, Dave felt that having a required course was one way of ensuring it happens.

> I'm pragmatic enough now to realize that if you don't have a person that has ownership, and also gets paid for it and has tenure…if you don't have that person, whose going to champion it [inclusion]?...So in our particular program, I think the course is a good way of doing it. It forces the issue to be dealt with, maybe not systematically enough, maybe not coherently across the courses, but at least there's one person dealing with it and committed to it. I worry about programs where student teachers can pick this or this or this. My sense is that the content of this particular course can be embedded in a variety of different topics if there is a way of structuring that, but I guess I'm realistic enough to realize that that's not the way it tends to operate.

Like Dave, Marlene felt that the inclusive education course was an important addition in attempting to reconcile gaps in the former program. She explained:

> When we moved away from the [old] model, which had some strengths and some weaknesses, some of the areas that we identified, that were not addressed, were the notions of community, collectivity, inclusivity, different voices, different perspectives etc.- those areas in planning for a teacher education program. So, where it directly came from or who suggested it, I can't recollect that, but I think it came out of our discussions as a faculty about what needed to be, or what should be represented in a teacher education program, and what wasn't there in the one that we were working with.

Marlene felt that providing a venue in which issues of inclusivity were required to be addressed was important, considering that once a teacher is certified, "there is no requirement to ever complete any other education coursework." Though Marlene noted that some areas of inclusive education could be addressed in other courses, she felt that the likelihood of it occurring depended "on who [was] teaching the course and on how it [was] structured." She clarified:

> I think some of the other teacher education programs would argue that there are concepts embedded in various courses…and that it isn't necessary to have a specific course about those issues. My sense is that you can argue that, but if you don't have a specific course to address those issues, it's really easy in the other courses to skirt around them and not attend to them at all, because there is this urgency of dealing with too many other concepts. So there is value in actually having a place where you at least begin to address some of those concepts.

Like Marlene, Andrew indicated that some inclusivity issues relating to respect and self-awareness may be raised during other courses, such as in the Career and Personal Planning section of the Social Studies Methodology course. He noted, however, that a small section of one course isn't enough "to even scratch the surface of change in a student teacher's, or a preservice teacher's, consciousness about what the real issues of inclusivity are." Though Andrew felt that the inclusive education course was an important first step in responding to the inclusivity gap within Cook's education program, he felt that it wasn't enough. He explained:

> Central to it [the inclusive education course] is trying to bring forward the idea for student teachers that inclusivity doesn't just happen naturally. It's not an organic thing…It has to be attended to. It has to be a conscious act…The thing is, that I'm not sure after leaving the program, even with this course, how many student teachers, deep in their hearts, really understand the shift between equality and differentiation and that to be really fair to all the children of difference in your class, you have to be differentiated in your orientation towards them…One of my biggest worries as I walk through a two, three or four year experience with preservice learners, is that an isolated course isn't enough. It's a good starting point, but unless the concepts and the essence of this course, which I think is inclusivity, is celebrated, extended and integrated into all other areas including Social Studies, Language Arts, Mathematics, Art, Drama, etc., then I think what happens is that students compartmentalize it and it becomes a set of learnings that they have to demonstrate, show and sometimes flaunt within the construct of that course. I'm not sure of the extent of the transferability of the key concepts of inclusivity to practice, or even to other domains.

Judy also felt that a more comprehensive effort to integrate inclusivity into all the disciplines was needed to assist the inclusive education course in narrowing the inclusivity gap within Cook's education program. She did, however, note that a few instructors were addressing some cross-cultural topics within their course areas. As she observed:

> They do a real positive, celebratory look at different people, who sometimes are on the margins. They don't look at power relations and systems of oppression, but they do that more positive stuff. So we could say that that supports it. It's just a different aspect of it.

Sarah felt that the areas of inclusion commonly addressed in courses at Cook University College, and within other education programs in the province, focused on learning and behaviour disabilities to the exclusion of the more subtle areas of prejudice involving ethnicity, socio-economics etc. She felt that there was no excuse for education programs not to be addressing all aspects of inclusion, especially since inclusivity issues are now within the provincial curriculum and outlined in the

standards of the provincial teacher education governing body. She remarked: "A program is falling short if they're not including it."

Principles

The educational principles and values of the research participants featured prominently in the case study interviews. Not surprisingly, theses principles, in most cases, were strongly aligned with the underlying principles of the inclusive education course and with the belief in its importance as an agent of change.

One of the reasons Dave advocated so strongly for the inclusive education course was that he believed that educational exclusion is contextual and that it is a teacher's social responsibility actively to respond and to prevent this exclusion:

> If we were successful with our students in this course, the first thing that they would do when they walked into a class is to look and say "O.k. which of the kids would I consider at risk to be excluded in this class, for whatever reason, my style, where we live, their peers" - whatever it is - and then they would figure out strategies for trying to mitigate that to the extent that it's possible…Each of us has vulnerabilities…and sometimes we can cope with those and the people around us don't notice or don't care, but sometimes people notice and sometimes people react very cruelly to those places where we are most vulnerable. In a classroom we deserve to be protected and if we are going to learn we deserve to be protected. We deserve to be supported so that we can develop ways to cope with that…There is no curriculum that deals with that. The intent is that we have a social responsibility and it's sort of getting there, but when you look around at what's actually going on in classrooms, I'm not convinced that it's really doing the job. So then it's back to the teacher. What dispositions do we need to have and what skills do we need to have in order to mitigate this with kids? As far as I'm concerned, the bottom line is that no kid should be excluded in any meaningful way in a classroom. So I guess really what it comes to is that the most vulnerable populations are different at different times.

Dave felt that, despite its current stability within the program, the inclusive education course at Cook University College would always be vulnerable within the faculty. He

attributed its vulnerability mainly to the faculty's differing beliefs and principles regarding the purpose of preservice teacher education. While Dave felt that some faculty, as well as other education programs, envisioned teacher education as the study of education, he saw it as preparing students to become competent teachers. He explained:

> Our job [is] to help people to become really good beginning teachers - that's our job. What are the challenges? Well one of the challenges is that you end up with these kids that are excluded by you, inadvertently, or excluded by other kids or excluded in the community. Well then, if our job is to help you become an excellent beginning teacher, then we need to address that. And the reasons they are excluded will come into that. They will inform the conversation but not drive the conversation. Our job is to include them and to do that you need to be aware of these other issues…I think it really starts to get at the core of what the job of teaching is because it gets away from this idea of "My job is to transmit all of the Social Studies or all of the Math." I mean that's what the methods courses do. It always seems to me that the subtext of those kinds of courses is: "I have this body of stuff that I'm told I have to convey so I've got to convey it. Now what are the tricks I'm going to use to convey it?" Whereas if this [inclusive education] is being taught, or learned the way I think it aught to be learned, the focus is: "There's that kid and what do I need to do, to help that kid grow and flourish?" The focus is on the kid…If we can deal with this kind of stuff within teacher education, then with the rest of the stuff, we're on track. This is the one that's going to tell us. I mean you can fake it on the rest of it, but with this one you can't.

Marlene also indicated that she believes that preparing preservice learners to be effective teachers is the goal of teacher education. To accomplish this goal, she noted that you have to provide the learners with the historical context of education, from multiple perspectives and as it relates to inclusion and exclusion. She commented:

> I thought it [the historical context] was valuable and I think, with reflection, people went away feeling that it was useful background to helping understand why there are feelings of anger about education in [the province] from some parent groups or feelings of being hurt, excluded, insulted or treated really, really badly. My sense, and I have a history degree, but my sense is that we do need some of that background context to understand more fully the situation.

Given Andrew's belief in the immense importance of addressing inclusivity in a comprehensive and integrated manner, he clearly felt that one course on inclusive education wasn't enough to move all students to a "deep level of understanding." He believed, however, that a mandatory course on inclusive education was a good idea, in principle, if it was implemented properly:

> [It should be] mandatory as long as it's valued. As long as it's not a formal, mandated, structured thing that people only see as an isolated entity. It has to be part of a collaborative culture - trying to promote a culture of inclusivity - not a formalized curriculum of inclusivity. And not a bunch of steps or courses or exams, but a shared understanding that inclusivity has to be a central value that's held to be important by all the people involved – faculty, students, parents - the whole thing.

Andrew felt, despite his concerns about what was lacking in Cook's program as a whole, that offering the inclusive education course was an important first step towards consciously acknowledging and prioritizing inclusivity. He remarked:

> I think it really enforces and reflects respect, and we're modeling respect of difference within our own classrooms when we're bringing it to a very conscious focus. I think there are people in the middle who may have been sort of aware of it but not really acutely aware of it and I think it has really strengthened those persons' resolve to go into the classrooms and actively and proactively work with curriculum and interactions with kids that promote inclusivity.

Like Andrew, Judy had struggled with her ambivalence towards the inclusive education course. Ultimately though, her experience of teaching the course strengthened her belief in its importance. She stated:

> You really need to intentionally attend to issues like gender, race, sexism and homophobia, in order to address things. The best of intentions aren't enough. You need to understand the complexity of those systems, schemas, or structures, whatever you want to call them. You really need to understand, in order to make a change. It's like the default on a computer. If you don't do something different, it will always default back to the status quo. You have to be really vigilant all the time. I feel that's confirmed when working with these students. It would be so easy not to have this course in place and just to

> assume that they're good, well-meaning and intending people and that they will take the best interests of their students into account. But that's not enough. You have to be really active to counter or disturb these systems.

Since teaching the inclusive education course and increasing her own awareness about the prevalence of exclusion within the school system, Sarah also felt that the course was a critical component in preparing competent preservice teachers. In particular, Sarah felt that the course provided the students some insight into the many ways students are excluded by teachers and other students. She explained:

> The ultimate goal is that when you stand in your classroom, if you feel yourself allowing it [exclusion] to go on in the back of the room, or you're not giving the same thing to every student - and you can't give the exact same thing to every student, that's not realistic - but if you have the sense that you just don't like a kid, then think about why that is. Are they First Nations? Is that why? Are they black? Is that why? Are they Asian? Is it the accent? Are they from the Middle East? Is that why? Does the mom wear a burqa? Is that why? Really process why, and if it's anything down that road, do some self-discovery and get over it. That was what I said, off the syllabus, that I would hope would be the main goal. Even though you go through this course, and it doesn't matter how enlightened you may be, you're still going to have those feelings; they will come up. This is reality for a human being with a human brain. Sometimes we struggle with accepting people who are different from us. What you do about it and how much you include them, is your own business, in your big life, but not in the classroom. It's not your business anymore - it's your responsibility to do that. How evolved you are as a human - that's your own journey and I hope the best for you - but as a classroom teacher, you need to really process it and not let it happen in your classroom.

Reflecting on her experience in teaching the course, Sarah summarized her conclusions concerning its importance:

> Once I saw the growth that occurred, I became aware of how much the preservice teachers didn't think about inclusion, and what a sad thing that is. So I think absolutely. It's absolutely, crucially important.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the findings incorporated in this chapter relate to educational literature in the field, as well as the various implications of these findings for educational policy and practice.

INTERTEXT VI – PARTICIPANT NARRATIVE

"Sometimes we struggle with accepting people who are different from us. What you do about it and how much you include them, is your own business, in your big life, but not in the classroom. It's not your business anymore - it's your responsibility to do that. How evolved you are as a human - that's your own journey and I hope the best for you - but as a classroom teacher, you need to really process it [exclusion] and not let it happen in your classroom."

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

In this final chapter, I synthesize and reflect on the findings of my research. Specifically, I discuss how the key themes from my findings relate to the educational literature, as well as the resulting implications. In this chapter, I also provide recommendations for further exploration in this area, and offer some concluding reflections on inclusive teacher education.

Discussion

In the previous chapter, I presented the findings from my data on the mandatory inclusive education course for preservice teachers at Cook University College. The key themes that emerged were: structural challenges, student resistance, teacher isolation, compromise, pedagogy, student evaluation, the role of administration, and the importance of the course. In the next section, I discuss these themes in relation to the literature pertaining to this field, as well as some of the implications of the findings for educational policy and practice.

Structural Challenges

Since required courses on inclusive education are relatively rare within Canadian Education Faculties, little has been written on such structural challenges to inclusive education as course length and format, challenges which the research participants at Cook University College acknowledged as arising from teaching the course in a short or compressed time frame. Some of these challenges included the

pressure of allocating credits to the course within an already busy program schedule and the difficulty in finding the appropriate course format, placement and duration which would allow students the necessary time and space to process and reflect on the difficult course content. Other challenges included selecting and prioritizing course content, as well as establishing trust and creating sustained and transferable learning within a compromised time frame.

Despite the challenges, all the research participants felt that the inclusive education course was worthwhile. Their experiences, however, highlight the importance of offering inclusive education as a comprehensive course with significant course credits and hours offered over a sustained time frame (minimum of six weeks). Such course parameters are important given that enduring attitude and behaviour changes are inherent in the course objectives. Consideration, it was felt, must also be given to the course placement within the program. Offering the course in a busy or high stress term tends to reduce the energy, time and thought the students can put into it, and thus reduces its impact.

Challenges to inclusive education related to diversity within Canadian Education Faculties have been partially addressed within the literature: there are some studies on the challenges associated with the limited diversity of preservice teachers, but less has been written on the limited diversity of education faculty members. Research on preservice teacher enrolment has highlighted the ideological challenges of inclusive education given a predominantly white, middle-class, heterosexual, and able-bodied student population (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004; Wane, 2003). Research participants at Cook

University College concurred with this research, reiterating that neither the preservice teacher population nor the education faculty is representative of the diversity of students at regional schools. Recognizing this disconnect, research participants spoke of the limited modelling and inclusive practices occurring within the education program, as well as the difficulty in creating open and safe classroom climates in which to discuss inclusivity issues. Both student resistance and the inauthentic fabrication of exclusion scenarios derived from outside of the students' and teachers' lived experiences were identified by participants as concerns stemming from the limited diversity of course participants.

Despite evidence in the literature that under-representation of diversity within education faculties is not a new concern (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), few programs have proactively altered their enrolment process or faculty hiring practices to address this problem (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Though each course composition is unique, and initiatives, such as the 'Access Initiative' in place at Cook University College, are attempting to mediate diversity under-representation, it is clear that more intentional policies and practices for recruiting, enrolment and hiring are needed to significantly increase the diversity of students and faculty within Canadian education programs.

Student Resistance

The topic of preservice teacher resistance to theory wasn't the focus of my literature review and didn't feature prominently in the literature I surveyed. It was, however, raised by some of the research participants within my case study as an impediment to the inclusive education course. In particular, participants found

preservice learners resistant to exploring theoretical perspectives on the history of education. Participants felt that part of the reason for student resistance to theory was a lack of previous exposure to it. Participants noted, in fact, that theory is often absent, undervalued, or fragmented within education programs and as a result, preservice teachers tend to be very practically oriented and resistant to time spent on theoretical constructs. Since theory is an integral part of inclusive education, participants were confronted by the resultant student resistance. In an effort to mitigate this resistance, some participants attempted to present theoretical ideas in an experiential format which is typically more palatable to Education students.

This disconnect between theory and practice within teacher education is a serious concern, since theory is critical to informed action (praxis) and, specifically, to achieving the goals of inclusive education. Early and frequent exposure to theory is important within education programs in order to ensure that students value it. Integrating theory across disciplines would undoubtedly assist in making the connections between theory and practice.

Preservice teacher resistance to the ideological constructs of inclusive education, or more specifically to the topics of educational privilege, equity and power, has been noted by many researchers and practitioners within the subject literature (Dome et al., 2005; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lund, 1998; Pewewardy, 2005; Wane, 2003). While research participants in my case study confirmed that ideological resistance occurs in the teaching of inclusive education, its occurrence was varied. Some of the factors that affected the level of student resistance included the mode of instruction and the nature of the topic, as well as the personality, beliefs and

background experiences of both the instructor and the students in the course. That each participant in the case study envisioned different course objectives further influenced students' reception of the course.

Some instructors focussed on consciousness-raising and felt that the time frame of the course limited their ability to develop the trust and safety needed to explore the course content on a personal and emotional level. These instructors experienced minimal student resistance, a somewhat predictable outcome, since consciousness-raising, which tends to focuses more on awareness about past and present than on future behaviours, tends to put less pressure on individuals (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 1994). Further, since the focus of consciousness-raising is on decreasing the discrepancy between what an individual knows and doesn't know, there is no direct behaviour change or action required by the individual involved in this process (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 1994). The theoretical drawback is that raising consciousness doesn't of itself typically result in sustained behaviour change (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 1994).

The instructors who focussed more on facilitating emotional arousal and self-evaluation regarding issues of educational inequity encountered significant student resistance. Resistance was especially prevalent amongst the younger students and in response to the topics of gender, educational history and sexual orientation. Resistance took several forms: silence, course appeals, poor faculty evaluations, tears, confrontations and defensive behaviour. Though these instructors felt that emotional arousal was critical to encouraging a shift in the attitudes and behaviours of the students, they sometimes questioned the permanence of the behavioural shift, given

the course's relatively brief time frame and the isolation of the course concepts within the education program.

Overall, the prevalence of resistance to inclusive education seems to be proportional to the degree to which the course instructor challenges the students to acknowledge and act on the discrepancy between the educational status quo and educational equity. When seen in this light, resistance can be thought of as a symbol of the course's progress towards success. Despite the challenges inherent in facing student resistance, inclusive education courses must go deeper than consciousness-raising in order to facilitate ideological border crossing and sustained behavioural change. Inclusive education must impact students on an emotional level, evoke self-reflection and, most importantly, secure a commitment to intentional action towards educational equity.

Teacher Isolation

Though not addressed very directly within the literature, the theme of isolation associated with the teaching of inclusive education can be inferred from the level of difficulty experienced by many inclusive education instructors and from the seeming lack of peer support within the Education field. In particular, I interpreted the descriptions within the literature of the uphill ideological battle experienced by inclusive education instructors who work against the educational grain as elements of isolation. As Cochran-Smith (2004) notes:

> Teachers who work against the grain are in the minority. Often they must raise their voices against teaching and testing practices that have been 'proven' effective by large-scale educational research…Teaching against the grain is challenging and sometimes discouraging work. (p. 28)

The lack of formal responses within most Canadian education programs to several decades of attention on the need for inclusive education (Hollins & Guzman, 2005) further explains the sense of isolation experienced by those few instructors involved with inclusive education courses.

Several research participants in my case study confirmed that feelings of isolation are linked to teaching inclusive education. In particular, a profound sense of isolation was experienced by those instructors who facilitated emotional arousal and self-reflection in the teaching of the course concepts. These participants experienced isolation most significantly in relation to their peers, but also in relation to their students, many of whom were resistant to core concepts. The participants' sense of isolation stemmed partly from feeling that they had to shoulder all of the responsibility for addressing issues of educational equity and even for the ethical principles of the students in the program. Instructor isolation also stemmed from the sense that the objectives of the inclusive education course were diametrically opposed to those of other courses because they tended to challenge the educational status quo rather than conform to it.

The experiences of isolation described by my research participants highlights the importance of peer support for inclusive education. Part of this support should involve creating greater academic support networks on inclusive education pedagogy. More importantly, peer support should involve the shared commitment of all faculty members to integrate inclusive education principles into their educational practices and subject curricula.

Compromise

It is often said that a teacher's role is ambiguous due to the multiple elements of the role and the many interpretations of it. There is perhaps even more ambiguity concerning teacher education, which over the years has been caught up in the shifting tensions between politics, technology and educational theory (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Not surprisingly, those educators involved in teacher education are faced with the challenges and compromises inherent in responding to these shifting tensions, while staying true to their own educational principles and beliefs. As the literature suggests, preservice teacher education is an especially challenging road for inclusive educators whose work aims to disrupt the deeply ingrained educational status quo (Dome et al., 2005; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Pewewardy, 2005). Teachers who work against the status quo "must wrestle with their own doubts, fend off the fatigue of reform, and depend on the strength of their individual and collaborative convictions that their work ultimately makes a difference in the fabric of social responsibility" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 28).

All the research participants in my case study felt burdened with the need to compromise in varying capacities relating to the teaching role, curriculum selection and impact of the inclusive education course. With regards to the teaching role, some participants spoke of the internal struggles they faced in coming to terms with a task that caused such discomfort and resistance amongst the students and that provided very little immediate gratification. These participants were able to accept this role because they believed that heightened emotions and even tension are part of the process of student self-evaluation and change. They were further supported by the

belief that the impact of the course would be manifested months or even years down the road when the students had classes of their own. Compromises were also made by participants during the difficult process of selecting and prioritizing the content to be covered within the limited confines of the course. Finally, and most significantly, participants spoke of some of the course's unintended consequences with which they grappled and ultimately had to accept as potential risks, including concerns that the course might further entrench students in their limited or exclusionary viewpoints, generate student guilt, and reduce faculty accountability concerning issues of inclusion. As a result of the overall reduced faculty accountability regarding inclusion, some participants felt that it was difficult to hold students responsible for the unethical attitudes and behaviour that sometimes surfaced within the course. There were also concerns that students had limited power to act on their heightened awareness regarding inclusion within their practicum settings.

Clearly, making compromises is not a new feature of teaching. Given, however, the many structural and ideological challenges faced by inclusive education instructors, it seems to be a process prone to feelings of doubt, fatigue and frustration. Thus, it is particularly important that inclusive concepts are implemented in an integrated and consistent manner across the educational disciplines, not only to increasing faculty accountability for modeling and addressing issues of inclusion, but to ensure that all faculty become responsible for the inclusive attitudes and behaviours of students. Furthermore, the intentional integration and reinforcement of inclusive concepts within multiple settings is necessary to increase the permanence and transferability of the learning.

Pedagogy

The literature on inclusive education highlights a variety of pedagogical philosophies and strategies aimed at creating culturally competent preservice teachers. The literature suggests a range of undertakings for preservice teachers, including the evaluation of their own experiences of oppression (Dei, 1996), receiving training, support, and mentoring on diversity responsive practices (Sobel & Taylor, 2005), taking mandatory courses on multicultural education (Mahrouse & Mujawamariya, 2004), and building student relationships that promote empowerment (James, 2005). Regarding specific pedagogical strategies for effective inclusive education, the literature is also varied and inconclusive. Nevertheless, despite the lack of agreement, a range of strategies have emerged from the literature, including the use of shared journaling (Pewewardy, 2005), curriculum based on the writing of minority authors (Hesch, 1999), ethnographic research in diverse communities (Crawford, Crumpler, Lenski, & Stallworth, 2005), and narrative reflections (Dome et al., 2005).

As in the literature, my research also suggested a range of pedagogical philosophies and strategies for effective inclusive education. Some broader philosophical approaches suggested by my research participants included pre-instructional assessment for guiding curriculum, experiential learning, tying academic concepts to emotional experience, showing students how academic tenets manifest in the world, drawing in student advocates on inclusion, and avoiding teaching dogma. Specific effective pedagogical strategies included using role plays, guest speakers, journals, literature, non-fiction narrative, guided discussions, jig-saw activities, inclusive music, and films to develop the course concepts. Though each research

participant employed unique pedagogical philosophies and strategies in teaching the course, all participants valued pedagogical variety.

Based on both the literature and the experiences of my research participants, it is clear that there is no formula for effective inclusive education pedagogy. There are, however, several underlying pedagogical principles that emerge as important in both the literature and in my case study. First, it is clear that attention must be given to setting up a classroom climate of safety, security and comfort so that honest dialogue is possible. Second, if the inclusive concepts from the course are to be owned by the students and transferred out into the school context, then students must have an experiential, emotional and personal understanding of the academic concepts. In gaining this insight, preservice teachers must engage with a diversity of perspectives, including controversial ones, which can provide a catalyst for the critical examination of their own assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives (Dome et al., 2005). Activities such as guest speakers, field trips, role plays and journals, which challenge students to encounter, reflect and respond to new perspectives may be useful tools in achieving these goals. Further, regardless of the instructor's pedagogical preferences, it is critical that sufficient time be allotted within each class for the purpose of debriefing, unpacking, challenging and discussing the course content and individual assumptions connected to it. Finally, it is clear that pedagogical variety, to accommodate a range of learning styles, is key to the success of inclusive education.

Student Evaluation

The topic of evaluation doesn't feature prominently in the literature regarding the inclusive education of preservice teachers. What does feature prominently are the many challenges faced by inclusive educators in the process of challenging students' perspectives on issues relating to inclusivity (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dome et al., 2005; Levine-Rasky, 2000). I would surmise that the evaluation of this process, involving student self-awareness and growth, would be no less, and perhaps even more, difficult. My interpretation of the inherent difficulties in evaluating inclusive education is further based on the descriptions of some of the pedagogical activities used in inclusive education, such as shared journaling (Pewewardy, 2005), ethnographic research in diverse communities (Crawford, Crumpler, Lenski, & Stallworth, 2005) and narrative reflections (Dome et al., 2005). Dome et al. (2005), for example, categorized preservice teacher responses to narrative reflections as culturally aware, open (and apologetic), superficial, and/or defensive. If and how these narrative reflections were formally evaluated is not clear, but it would seem that this activity, and others similar to it, aimed at supporting preservice teachers in confronting their biases regarding diversity and difference, would be very challenging to evaluate using conventional grading strategies.

All participants in my case study agreed that evaluation is a considerable challenge associated with teaching inclusive education. The main dilemma raised by participants was figuring out how to engender honesty in the classroom while attempting to evaluate students' values and principles pertaining to inclusion and equity. Another assessment challenge raised by participants was that of assigning

value to student work within the course, given their belief that the true test of the course would be played out in the future behaviour of the students within their own classrooms. Participants also discussed the personal difficulty of evaluating students who didn't appear to be open to the course concepts, but who could still 'talk the talk' and meet the course requirements. All of these challenges were set against the backdrop of frequent grade appeals that required that the course evaluation be both rigorous and substantiated.

In responding to the challenges of evaluation, participants were given the administrative option to set up the course using either a credit/non-credit format or a letter grade system. A majority of participants preferred the credit/non-credit format, citing a variety of reasons, including the beliefs that this format engendered more student honesty, afforded students the freedom to focus on ideas rather than the quality of their representation, and helped maintain instructor integrity. One participant who chose the credit/non-credit format pointed out that some students were required to complete, re-do and improve on course work before they received the course credit. This participant further noted that students shared a variety of responses to this format, ranging from saying they didn't work as hard to saying that they valued the format because it helped them to be more open and honest. The one research participant who strongly aligned her evaluation preference with the letter grade system did so because of her belief in grade variation based on effort. This participant further felt that letter grades put more pressure on students to complete course readings and be prepared for class.

It seems from both the literature and my case study that the evaluation of inclusive education presents a myriad of challenges for instructors. Clearly, administrative support in allowing instructors to deviate from the conventional letter grade evaluation system helps alleviate some of the challenges with which instructors must grapple. Administrative support is also necessary for dealing with grade appeals that arise from the course. Thus, serious consideration should be given to offering the course using a credit/non-credit format. Though instructor evaluation preferences should always be taken into consideration, and a case can be made for offering the course using a letter grade format, the objectives of inclusive education seem to be better aligned with a credit/non-credit format, principally because one of the underlying objectives of the course is to generate open and honest student dialogue. When students know that their dialogue, reflections and ideas are being hierarchically evaluated, it seems likely that they will be more focussed on saying what they think the instructor is looking for, rather than what they truly believe. Without student honesty, inclusive education instructors will not have the chance to engage, challenge and expand the perspectives of their students, which is the main purpose of the course.

Role of Administration

Given the minimal Canadian research, as well as the rarity of course offerings, in the area of preservice teacher inclusive education, it is no surprise that there are many gaps in the literature on this topic. One such absence in the literature concerns the role of faculty administration in the inclusive education of preservice teachers. Since that there are examples within the educational literature of inclusive education

programs, such as that offered by the Winnipeg Education Centre, as well individual instructors who are choosing to addressing issues of inclusivity, it is probable that administrative support for inclusive education is occurring. However, the level and type of support being given by faculty administration, particularly by administrative leaders such as Education Deans, remains largely unknown.

Though only two research participants in my case study spoke directly about the role of administration, it was implied by all participants that administrative support and involvement with the inclusive education course is important. Participants noted that administrative involvement in the advocating and developing of inclusive education courses, at the provincial, university and faculty levels, demonstrates an investment in the process, as well as makes clear for faculty and students, that inclusivity is a priority. Once a pertinent course is established, participants pointed out the practical necessity of ongoing administrative support in obtaining funding, hiring suitable instructors, and protecting it when it seems vulnerable to program cutbacks. Participants also noted the importance of administrative involvement with the course in promoting it to education students, introducing guest speakers, being present at special events and mediating student resistance. In addition, participants felt it was critically important that administrative leaders provide frequent encouragement and support to the course instructors, as well as allow flexibility regarding the course timetable, activities and evaluation format. Participants were careful to point out that, to effect any profound change in the perspectives of students, all education stakeholders at the school, community and university levels must take responsibility for promoting and addressing inclusivity.

Clearly, administrative support is critical in many aspects of the success of an inclusive education course. In particular, the direct involvement of administrative leaders, through their advocacy, flexibility, instructor encouragement and physical presence, provides support to instructors in a challenging role and models the value and priority of inclusion to both faculty and students.

Importance of the Course

The importance of inclusive education comes through strongly in the literature, though it is poorly reflected in changes within teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Lund, 1998). As Hollins & Guzman (2005) point out, in their review of research on preparing teachers for diverse students, the consistent weakness in the research "reflects the current state of the larger field of teacher education practice itself and…[the] consistent marginalization and underfunding of research on issues related to diversity" (p. 480). It seems that the rate of change within preservice teacher education is similar to that within the public school system. Though the importance of change is widely acknowledged, both systems continue to reproduce educational exclusion and inequity.

The importance of inclusive education, and specifically of the implementation of a required course on inclusive education for preservice teachers, was also a dominant theme expressed by my research participants. Though there was some variation in the reasons given for the course's importance, several were common to most participants. First, and most importantly, participants saw the course an important attempt to reconcile the absence, or optional nature, of attention given to

the more subtle areas of educational exclusion, relating to ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation and/or socio-economic status, within most teacher education programs. Reconciling this gap was important to participants because of their underlying beliefs regarding the historical and current prevalence of educational exclusion through policy, curriculum and the behavior of both teachers and students. Participants felt that providing a required inclusive education course would help to circumvent the potential for instructor-dependent, minimal and/or superficial coverage of inclusivity issues. Participants further felt that the inclusive education course fit with the deeper purpose of teacher education, which was to prepare competent teachers who understood their social responsibility to actively foster educational equity within their classrooms.

Though participants believed the course to be important, their convictions weren't without conditions. Participants felt that, for the course to be successful, inclusivity had to be valued by the faculty as a whole. They further felt that for the sustained and transferable learning of the course concepts, these principles had to be celebrated and integrated across the educational disciplines.

Both the literature and my case study confirm the importance of inclusive education in preparing preservice learners to be competent teachers within diverse classrooms. Though a mandatory course on inclusive education is not the only method for addressing the inclusivity gap, it is one method of ensuring that preservice teachers are required to engage and grapple with issues of inclusivity. The more that inclusivity is valued, modelled and reinforced throughout all aspects of teacher

education, the greater the impact it will have on the preservice teachers, and consequently on their future students.

Key Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings that emerged from my research entail several key implications for consideration in the development of policy and practice involving inclusive education:

1. Inclusive education should be a required course for all preservice teachers. Inclusive education courses should be offered as comprehensive, full credit courses and should ideally be offered over several months duration.
2. Inclusivity in education should be an ideological thread that runs through all education courses. Teaching for cultural competency and social inclusion must be implemented in an integrated and consistent manner to produce sustained results that will transform the experiences of preservice teachers and will translate into inclusive and equitable experiences for a diversity of prospective students.
3. To achieve behavioural change, inclusive education must go deeper than consciousness-raising. Inclusive education must impact students on an emotional level, evoke self-reflection and, most importantly, secure a commitment to intentionally work towards student inclusion and equity. Exposing students to a diversity of marginalized perspectives is an important part of this process.
4. Since praxis is a critical element of inclusive education, theory must be integrated into education in order for informed action to result. For students to value theory, they must be exposed to it early on and frequently in their education program. The

threads of theory should be integrated across disciplines so that connections are made between theory, practice and action.

5. Effective pedagogy for inclusive education should incorporate the following: the establishment of classroom climates of comfort and safety; time for debriefing, challenging and dialogue about the course concepts; and a range of activities to accommodate learning styles and preferences. To increase the chances of the inclusive concepts being transferred out into the school context, the students must have an experiential, emotional and personal understanding of them. Reflective journals, guest speakers, films, personal narratives and role plays are potentially effective strategies for engaging students with inclusive concepts.
6. Evaluation of inclusive education courses should be instructor determined. Serious consideration should be given to offering the course in a non-graded format.
7. Preservice teacher recruitment and enrolment should proactively seek student diversity, relating to ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and/or ability.
8. Education faculties should proactively seek educator diversity, relating to ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and/or ability.
9. Faculty wide peer support for inclusive education is important to its success. Peer support should involve the presence of active academic support networks on inclusive education pedagogy. Peer support should also involve a faculty wide commitment to integrate inclusive education principles into all educational practices and subject curricula.

10. Administrative leaders within education programs should be directly involved in the advocacy, development, and implementation of inclusive education courses. Their presence within the course models the course's importance to both faculty and students. Their support and encouragement of faculty is also critical to the course's success, given the inherent difficulty in teaching the course and the frequent complaints, appeals and resistance associated with the course.

Recommendations for Further Research

With growing student diversity and the lack of teacher diversity now clearly on the public's radar, the need for teacher education reform is undeniable. Nevertheless, there has been very little reform within Canadian teacher education programs and even less resulting research (Lund, 1998). The research that has been done, including mine, offers some insight into various attempts to mediate the gap, but all research is partial and located, and thus, there are endless possibilities for further research in the area of preservice teacher inclusive education.

In particular, there is a need for research focussed on the experiences of preservice teachers involved in inclusive education, since most of the research to date has focussed on the experiences of teacher educators involved in the process. Also, since most of the research on inclusive education has centered on issues relating to ability and multiculturalism, more research is needed in the areas of inclusion relating to gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

There is also a need to investigate and monitor how Canadian teacher education programs are responding to increasing public demand and policy pressure

to address inclusivity and equity issues. Comparisons should be made between programs, between optional and mandatory courses in the area, and between specific courses. The research done in this area should take into account the students' backgrounds, the instructors' backgrounds, the level of integration of inclusivity concepts throughout the program, and the specific structural, theoretical, pedagogical and evaluatory techniques being used.

While there is great value in the small-scale and short term research that has been done in this area of preservice teacher inclusive education, more large-scale, longitudinal studies are needed to add breadth and depth to the current knowledge base. Though some parallels can be drawn from research done in the United States, it is important that specifically Canadian research be done. It is also important that region specific research be carried out within Canada to represent the unique geographic and cultural elements of each region.

Concluding Reflections

"Inclusive schooling refers to educational practices that make for genuine inclusion of all students by addressing equity issues and promoting successful learning outcomes"
(Dei, 1996, p. 78)

Inclusive education operates on the premise that inequities, based on such things as ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and/or ability, exist in society, and more specifically in Canadian schools. In the context of teacher education, inclusive education asks preservice teachers to acknowledge that these inequities exist, to learn about the origins and processes used to carry out these inequities and to commit to mediate, even eradicate these inequities within their

future classrooms. This is a difficult process since, as both the literature and my case study confirm, preservice teachers are predominantly white, middle class, heterosexual and able bodied. As such, they typically work, consciously or unconsciously, to perpetuate the status quo that keeps inequities in place. Motivating preservice teachers towards praxis aimed at rupturing the status quo involves more than just consciousness-raising. It involves building trusting and transparent relationships, as well as finding pedagogical tools that challenge and empower the preservice teachers. Further, it involves a sustained and integrated effort to support the preservice teachers in behavioural change based on the re-evaluation of their assumptions, knowledge and, in some cases, core values and beliefs. This process involves heightened emotions and is prone to responses of resistance.

Clearly, inclusive teacher education is a complex and challenging task and the slow rate at which Education Faculties have responded to this need reflects this. Given, however, the significant and enduring impact teachers have on their students, the value of inclusive teacher education can't be emphasized enough. It is the responsibility of all educators to ensure that they are educating academically, as well as working towards equity and social justice for their students. Since teacher education programs have an unequalled opportunity to address teacher ideology, challenge privileged perspectives, and promote inclusive education, it is of utmost importance that they accept this challenge. As Lund (1998) notes:

> Teacher educators and researchers wishing to take up this significant challenge confront a long history of inaction variously explained as apathy, intolerance, or some other combination of bureaucratic afflictions. Seeking meaningful reforms in this context offers challenges, but the alterative of maintaining the status quo in the face of ongoing inequity and discrimination seems downright irresponsible. (pp. 271-272)

As I reflect on my own experiences of the education system and strive to investigate ways to make the system better, through my research on preservice teacher inclusive education, I must continually re-evaluate my goals. What is 'quality' education? What does educational equity look like? While my own answers to these questions continue to expand, as I engage with a diversity of perspectives and values, I find I most connect with the words of Cree educator Verna Kirkness (1999):

> You will know you have achieved your goal of quality education when your children are enjoying the challenge of school/learning, when their self-esteem and self-confidence is evident, when your children are proud of who they are, and when the links with the older generation are made. You will know you have achieved your goal when the majority of children who enter your system graduate and go on to further education or get a job, when they are living happy and fulfilled lives of their own making. (p. 28)

Though happiness, fulfillment and self-confidence aren't usually raised in debates on educational reform, I believe they represent the deeper and more profound potential of the education system, which when achieved, positions students on solid and equitable ground.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Interview Guide for Teachers

1. How have you been involved with the [inclusive education] course? (How many times have you taught the course? Were you the sole teacher or was the course team taught?)

2. What is your understanding of the origin of the course? (Why was the course developed? What/who drove the development process? Were you involved in this process? In what way?)

3. The course description in the college calendar states that the course is: *An exploration of strategies for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, including those who are at risk for exclusion in the classroom.*
   Who do you see as those learners who are at risk for exclusion in the classroom? What purpose/objectives do you see for this course?

4. How did you structure the course to achieve the purpose and objectives of the course?

5. What themes/topics have you chosen to address in the course? Why?

6. What pedagogical strategies have you used to teach the course?

7. What pedagogical strategies have you found to be ineffective in achieving the course objectives? Why do you think this is? Can you provide some examples from your experience?

8. What pedagogical strategies have you found to be effective in achieving the course objectives? Why do you think this is? Can you provide some examples from your experience?

9. What tensions/challenges have you experienced in teaching this course? Please discuss examples from your experience.

10. How did you respond to the tensions/challenges you experienced in teaching the course?

11. What role do you see evaluation playing within the course? How was your course set up with regards to evaluation?

12. How do think your personality and perspectives have impacted on the development and implementation of the course?

13. What other ways do you see learner 'inclusivity' being taken up/addressed within your Faculty of Education?

14. What role do you see a course such as this one playing in preservice teacher programs?

15. Do you believe a course such as this should be a required course for all preservice teachers? Please explain your response.

16. What role do you see the faculty administration playing in addressing issues of inclusivity within preservice teacher programs?

17. What impact do you think the course has had on the students who have taken it?

18. What insights have you gained through your experiences teaching the course?

19. What recommendations would you make to future instructors of the course?

20. What recommendations would you make to other education faculties regarding implementing a course such as this?

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B – Interview Guide for Education Dean

1. How did the college becoming an autonomous institution, impact on the manner in which inclusive education is addressed in your teacher education program?

2. Please describe the origin of the [inclusive education] course. (Why was the course developed? What/who drove the development process? Were you involved in this process? In what way?)

3. How have you been involved with the course, over the years that it has been in place?

4. The course description in the college calendar states that the course is: *An exploration of strategies for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, including those who are at risk for exclusion in the classroom.*
   Who do you see as those learners who are at risk for exclusion in the classroom?
   What purpose/objectives do you see for this course?

5. How has the course been structured to achieve the purpose and objectives of the course?

6. What themes/topics have been addressed in the course? Why?

7. What pedagogical strategies do you think have been ineffective in achieving the course objectives? Why do you think this is?

8. What pedagogical strategies do you think have been effective in achieving the course objectives? Why do you think this is? Can you provide some examples from your experience?

9. What tensions/challenges do you think exist in the teaching of a course like this?

10. How do you think the tensions/challenges are addressed within the course?

11. How do you think the individual teacher educators' personalities and perspectives impact on the development and implementation of the course?

12. What impact do you think the course has had on the students who have taken it?

13. Have you experienced any administrative challenges in implementing the course? If so, please describe the challenges.

14. What role do you see a course such as this one playing in preservice teacher programs?

15. Do you believe a course such as this should be required for all preservice teachers? Please explain your response.

16. What insights have you gained through your observation of and/or involvement with the course?

17. What recommendations would you make to other education faculties regarding implementing a course such as this?

18. What other ways do you see learner 'inclusivity' being taken up/addressed within your Faculty of Education?

19. What role/responsibility do you think the following groups of people have in addressing issues of inclusivity within preservice teacher programs: Ministries of Education; Teacher Associations; University and College Education Faculty Administration; University and College Education Faculty Professors? Others?

20. Where do you think the responsibility for preparing culturally competent teachers lies?

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C – Consent Letter

Polly D. Madsen
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University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5
E-mail: pmadsen@ualberta.ca

[Date]
[Research Participant's Name]
[Address]
[Postal code]

Dear [Research Participant's Name],

Re: Consent to participate in the research project entitled ***Resistance to growth: An investigation into the experiences of teacher educators involved in teaching inclusive education***

You are invited to participate in a research project that explores the experiences of teacher educators involved in delivering inclusive education courses for preservice teachers. The realm of inclusive education I will be looking at involves exploring strategies for the meaningful inclusion of all learners, with a focus on those students who are at risk of exclusion due to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or ability. The purpose of this case study is to examine the development of an inclusive education course, as well as to investigate the challenges faced and successes experienced by faculty involved in implementing and teaching the inclusive education course.

The research project will be part of my Master's of Education thesis and I will be the sole researcher involved in this project. The research findings may also be used in academic writing such as conference papers and journal articles.

Your participation in this research project will involve participating in a semi-structured, audio taped interview of approximately a 60 – 90 minute duration. You will also be requested to provide any policy and course documents related to the course for review by the researcher. You will be provided with a copy of the interview questions in advance of the interview. You will also be provided with a copy of the interview transcript and will be invited to make any corrections, deletions and amendments to it. Your interpretations and input will be valued and will be considered in the writing and editing processes. There is no perceived harm in participating in this study.

You are invited to sign the consent letter in the space provided below, once you have read and agree to the following participation guidelines:

- As a research participant you are asked to sign this consent letter to participate. Two copies have been provided so that you can retain one for your records.
- You have the right to withdraw or opt out of the research, without penalty, at any time during the data gathering process and up until one month following your review of the interview transcript.
- Processes to provide accuracy of data, security and confidentiality will be part of the research design. A digital recording device will be used to ensure the accuracy of data collected from the interviews. Data will be stored on a secure personal computer and/or in a locked filing cabinet, and will be deleted after 5 years.
- Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the data. Pseudonyms will be used in the study in an effort to maintain the anonymity of research participants. Although efforts will be made by the researcher to ensure anonymity, it cannot be guaranteed.
- At the conclusion of the study, a copy of the researcher's thesis will be provided to your Faculty of Education.

Should you have any concerns regarding the research project, please don't hesitate to contact me by emailing me at pmadsen@ualberta.ca, or by writing to me at the above address. Please also feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr. André Grace, at (780) 492-0767 or by email at andre.grace@ualberta.ca or the Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Frank Peters, at (780) 492-7607 or by email at frank.peters@ualberta.ca.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board (EE REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EE REB at (780) 492-3751.

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study.

Yours sincerely,
Polly D. Madsen

Consent to participate in the research project entitled ***Resistance to growth: An investigation into the experiences of teacher educators involved in teaching inclusive education*:**

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name (Please Print): _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____